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A Book of Worship for Village Churches

By

Edward K. Riepler

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CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, N. Y.



A Book of Worship for Village Churches

By

EDWARD K. ZIEGLER

PRINCIPAL, RURAL CHURCH SCHOOL
CHURCH OF THE BRETHREN

with a

FOREWORD

by

BISHOP J. WASKOM PICKETT, D.D.

OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

AGRICULTURAL MISSIONS FOUNDATION, INC.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

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THE AUTHOR'S PREFACE

FOR a number of years there has been a deep-felt need of a book on worship, and a book of worship orders, and suggestions for the observance of Christian festivals for India's rural churches. This handbook is the author's attempt to meet that need. It is the fruit of a few years of study, research and practical experience in the villages. It is written for the great army of devoted Christian pastors, teachers, and laymen who are leading the toiling villagers of India through worship to the feet of Christ.

There is great need for further research, wide experimentation, and exchange of experience in this field. Those whose desire it is to see the Church in this land really take root in the soil are doing much work in this field, and should have some means of exchanging experience and views. They are helping the Church to appropriate at once the splendid heritage of India's culture and the vast treasures of their Christian heritage from two thousand years. Out of these two streams of culture, the Indian Church will undoubtedly develop a cultus of worship which is truly Christian and truly Indian, a worship of God in Christ Jesus in which Indians may feel that they are drinking the Water of Life indeed, and from an Indian cup!

The chapters in Part One are the substance of courses of teaching given in the Rural Church School of the Church of the Brethren at Vyara and Bulsar over a period of four years. They have grown out of the discussion and practical work with a fine group of young village Christian leaders, who know their people and love their Christ. Their contribution to this book, through the discussions in class, and then through building, trying out, and revising many programs and orders of service, has been incalculable.

I owe a deep debt of gratitude to Bishop J. Waskom Pickett of the Methodist Episcopal Church, whose books, *Christian Mass Movements in India*, and *Christ's Way to India's Heart*,

and in later years whose friendship and counsel, have been a major inspiration in the pleasant task of preparing this book. I am especially grateful to him for reading the manuscript and writing the Foreword.

I am also deeply obligated to the secretaries of the National Christian Council, especially to the Rev. J. Z. Hodge for continued encouragement, and to the Rev. F. Whitaker who has read the manuscript and made many valuable criticisms and suggestions. I am grateful to the National Christian Council also for making possible the publication of the book.

My sincere thanks are due to a host of friends, Indian and missionary, who have given valuable help in various ways—reading portions of the manuscript, giving suggestions and counsel, and contributing and trying out programs and orders of service. Among many others, I must mention for special thanks the Revs. P. G. Bhagat and Somchand Ukadbhai, Mr. Rupsing Mangaldas, the Rev. E. L. King, the Rev. and Mrs. C. G. Shull, and the Rev. and Mrs. Amsey F. Bollinger.

I owe a debt of thanks to individuals and publishing companies who have graciously permitted the use of materials from articles and books, some of which are copyrighted material: Dr. John L. Goheen, *The Christian Century*, *The Indian Witness*, The Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, Biglow-Main-Excell Company, Dr. Wm. E. Orchard, for materials from *Divine Service*, and The Friendship Press. Many of the Scripture portions are taken from the American Revised Version of the Bible. Permission to use them has been granted by the International Council of Religious Education, who hold the copyright. I have tried to give due credit for all materials used, but if I have inadvertently omitted doing so, I shall appreciate having attention called to it, and shall seek pardon and correct omissions in future editions.

Finally, I owe an immeasurable debt of gratitude to my wife, whose constant encouragement and counsel has been one of the chief sources of inspiration to me in preparing this work.

Bulsar, Surat District, India, }
December, 1938. } EDWARD K. ZIEGLER

Concerning the American Edition

I desire also to express my deep appreciation to the Agricultural Missions Foundation and to Mr. John H. Reisner, its executive secretary, for inspiration and encouragement in many ways, for making the publication of an American edition possible, and for providing a world-wide distribution of it.

Easton, Maryland

E. K. Z.

June, 1939.



PUBLISHER'S NOTE

IT is a great pleasure to have a share in the wider distribution of Mr. Ziegler's remarkable book. When I first saw it during my trip to India last winter, I was immediately convinced of its great usefulness in other lands as well as in India. I therefore brought back with me one hundred copies of it to share with the executive officers of various home and foreign mission boards. The response has been so enthusiastic that we are reprinting five thousand copies of the earlier India edition. The book will now find its way to many countries in addition to India and we hope will inspire others to enrich it by their own experience and adapt it to other situations and cultures.

At the request of Mr. Ziegler, the Agricultural Missions Foundation, Inc., has copyrighted the book. This was done to guarantee its free use by religious organizations. Permission to translate and publish will be freely granted to missionaries and religious bodies upon written application. Our only concern is that it be of the greatest possible service in enriching the worship of rural churches wherever it may be of use.

Copies in English of A BOOK OF WORSHIP FOR VILLAGE CHURCHES are available in India from the Lucknow Publishing House, Lucknow, U.P., and from the National Christian Council, Nelson Square, Nagpur, C.P. The price is 12 annas. Copies are also available from the Agricultural Missions Foundation, Inc., at \$.25.

I desire also to express our deep appreciation of the generous attitude and cooperation of Mr. Ziegler in making the American edition possible.

JOHN H. REISNER, *Executive Secretary*
Agricultural Missions Foundation, Inc.
156 Fifth Avenue, New York, New York

June, 1939.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART I

	PAGE
Author's Preface	I
Publisher's Note	5
Foreword	9

CHAPTER

I. INTRODUCTION	11
II. WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE WORSHIP	18
What is True Worship	18
The Results of Worship	21
Worship and Christian Brotherhood	23
The Pattern of Worship	24
The Final Test	28
Suggestions for Further Study	29
III. MATERIALS OF WORSHIP AND THEIR USE	30
Music	33
Prayer	34
The Bible in Worship	37
The Offering	38
The Sacrament of Sacred Silence	39
Pictures	40
The Sermon	41
Drama	42
The Creed	42
Suggestions for Further Study	42
IV. HOW TO PLAN A WORSHIP PROGRAM	44
The Pattern of Worship and the Parts of the Service	48
Suggestions for Further Study	49
V. THE CHURCH YEAR	50
Which Festivals Shall we Observe	53
1. The Historic Christian Festivals	53
2. Christian Rural Life Festivals	54
3. Reclaimed Hindu Festivals	55
A Suggested Outline for a Church Year for Village Churches	58
Suggestions for Further Study	60

TABLE OF CONTENTS (*continued*)

	PAGE
VI. CREATING THE ATMOSPHERE OF WORSHIP	61
The Place of Worship	61
The Minister's Part in Creating Reverence	66
Some Miscellaneous Suggestions	68
Suggestions for Further Study	69
PART II	
Orders of Worship and Programs for Christian Festivals	
ORDERS OF WORSHIP	
A Service of Worship in the Words of the Bible	73
A Service of Worship for Sunday Morning (Methodist)	76
A Service of Worship	78
A Simple Liturgy for Village Churches	80
A Service of Worship for Sunday Morning	83
A Service of Sacred Silence	84
A Service of Worship in Song	85
A Brief Order for Daily Morning Prayers	86
A Brief Order for Daily Evening Prayers	87
PROGRAMS FOR CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS, ETC.	
A Worship Program for Christmas	88
Passion Week, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday	92
Pentecost—Whitsuntide	98
Planting Festival	100
Festival of the First Fruits	102
Harvest Thanksgiving Service	104
A Christian Observance of Divali	106
A Memorial Service	109
A Candle-Lighting Service for New Christians	111
Dedication of a Threshing Floor	113
Form of Service for Blessing Well	115
Service for Beginning a Village House	117
A Service for the Dedication of a Village Home	118
Service for the Dedication of Small Children	120
Service for Burial of the Dead	122
Offertory Sentences	125
A Table of Movable Festivals for 1939-1960	128
Bibliography	129

FOREWORD

BY BISHOP J. WASKOM PICKETT, OF THE
METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH

THE need for this book has been realized by many people. Since the publication of *Christian Mass Movements in India*, I have been asked by scores, and probably by hundreds of men and women who are working for Christ in Indian villages for the sort of help that this book will give. I have told many of them of the preparations being made by the Rev. Edward K. Ziegler to produce this book and I now rejoice that he has been able to complete his manuscript and have it published.

Relatively few Indian villagers are literate and the movements that have produced the Church of the Indian villages, with rare exceptions, have taken place in castes and tribes which have a rate of literacy even lower than the average. The problem of how knowledge of the truth as it is in Christ can be imparted to new Christians has baffled many ministers, evangelists and teachers. Much of what is said in sermons and lessons makes little or no impression on the minds of typical illiterate villagers. The types of worship service which have evolved in Western churches since literacy has become common do not meet the need of illiterate villagers in India. Services that are centered in the pulpit and in which congregational participation is provided only, or chiefly through reading, do not, and cannot, engage illiterates in the worship of God, and no one seems to be helped much by coming to Church to see the preacher worship God.

For illiterate Indian Christians a rich liturgy is almost a necessity. They do not have access to the Word of God. Unless their parents were Christians during their childhood their minds are stored with Hindu or Muslim lore, much of which hinders the development of a Christian mind and personality. What is said to them does not meet their spiritual needs un-

less they receive it and make it their own, and their minds have not been trained to receive and absorb. The liturgical service with its repeated use in worship of materials that express the eternal verities of the Christian faith has special values for them. These derive not alone from the acquaintance the liturgy gives with the truth but from its deposit in the subconscious mind of materials out of which personality is reconstructed and made more like unto the mind of Christ.

Bombay, India

November, 1938.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A FEW years ago the Indian Church, through the National Christian Council, set out to discover what was happening in the many areas of India where Mass Movements toward Christ have taken place. It sought to find out where and why the Church was growing, and if it was not growing, why not. The Survey commission under the leadership of Dr. J. Waskom Pickett, after several years of thorough scientific research, presented a report which has become one of the most illuminating and thought-provoking documents in the history of the Christian Church in India.

One of the most significant findings of this Survey was that concerning the relationship between worship and the growth and vitality of the Church. In those areas where the Church was growing, it was invariably found that real and satisfying worship has a major part in the programme of the Church. There it was found that the Churches were making progress in spiritual living, and had a warm evangelistic fervour. On the other hand, Churches in which the worship of God in Christ has been neglected, were almost all weak, stagnant, and ineffective. In the report of the Survey entitled *Christian Mass Movements in India*, Bishop Pickett says: "Beneficial social changes appear to have taken place most generally where Christian worship has been most firmly established, as in Nagercoil, Vidyanagar, Ranchi, and Guntur, and least generally where Christian worship has been least successfully inaugurated, as in Barhan, Etah, Ghaziabad, and Vikarabad. Where these converts have learned to worship God as revealed in Christ and have established habits of worship, they have acquired concepts of God and of themselves in relation to him that have powerfully affected their social standards, their conduct, and in the course of time their status in the villages. Worship of the God of Christ by these victims of the Hindu caste system is apparently destructive of the estimate of them-

selves that Hinduism had given to Malas and Madigas, Chamars and Chuhras. Belief in the love of God for them, enlivened and empowered by their worship, helps to create or to strengthen a sense of their value."¹

Let us contrast this picture with that of the villages where regular, satisfying and vital worship of God in Christ Jesus is not carried on. There the Church is stagnant. There is in it little growth in Christian graces of character, no desire to evangelize or share the blessings of Christ with neighbours, relatives, and friends, and no social passion. However good may be the programme of religious teaching in such village Churches, the level of attainment in Christian character and service is found to be distressingly low.

In far too many villages the picture of worship we see is uncomfortably like this: The minister or evangelist comes unannounced and unexpected to the village. He calls the villagers together. Someone brings out a cot upon which he sits. Another is sent to call the headman. Small unkempt, unclothed children stare from dark doorways. A bell is rung. The villagers who are not busy in their fields straggle in. Some of them are dirty and uncombed. No special preparation has been made for the service. There is no place set apart for the worship of God. Then the minister puts on his spectacles. He selects a hymn. He leads it and the children and perhaps a few others join in it. He reads a lesson from the Bible and preaches a sermon. He may take up a collection: it can scarcely be called an offering. He prays earnestly, perhaps at great length and in unfamiliar language for his flock. Then he returns to his home village.

What really has happened? A group of villagers, not a congregation, has gathered, and watched and heard the minister worship God. They have had no part in the service except the feeble singing of a hymn which they did not fully understand, and of which the tune sounded foreign to their ears. Some of them gave a pice in the collection. Is this what it means

¹ Pickett, J. W., *Christian Mass Movements in India*, New York, The Abingdon Press. p. 128. By permission of the Author.

to worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness? It is neither the beauty of holiness nor the holiness of beauty! Of course this picture is overdrawn. But honestly now, have you not often seen occasions like it?

What kind of worship, then, will satisfy the heart and change the life of our village brethren? Merely watching a preacher worship will neither satisfy him nor bring him into the life-transforming holy presence of the Heavenly Father. Worship for him must be absolutely real. He must have a vital part in it. It must be his own. The minister's part is to lead the congregation into the life-giving presence of God. It is to help the humble worshipper to express the deepest yearnings of his heart toward God.

How can our worship be made more radiant and winsome? It must first of all be *simple*. It must be couched in language which the simplest mind can quite understand. While it must deal with the deepest longings of the humble Christian's heart and express his highest hopes and aspirations, yet it must all be in the language of every common day. Furthermore it must be *a witness to true Christian brotherhood*, the brotherhood of the Lord's Supper and the family of God. There must be no barrier of caste, no distinction between rich and poor, educated and unlettered. All are and ought to be one family approaching in love and simple trust their heavenly Father.

Again, *worship must appeal to the Indian heart*. Western hymn tunes and forms of worship, western style benches, long sermons and wordy prayers do not really attract the soul of Indians. Satisfying worship, too, must be sincere, warm and deeply spiritual. Only such forms of worship as meet these standards have power to attract and change our village people. Florence Moyer Bollinger in a searching paper on *Building the Church Through Worship*, says: "Finding God in the silences we are uplifted in spirit; but the creaking of the cart-wheels on the road outside recalls us to the fact that the Church of Christ in India has begun its day of toil. It is not a church which has much time for silent meditation, but largely a Church which toils. In the forests, in the fields, on the dusty

roads, in the school-rooms and in the humble homes, the Church of Christ in India is toiling. Two ideals, then, we will put down in red letters for this toiling Church: First, that our forms of Church worship must be adapted to the people and their needs. Second, that the people must share in the worship."¹

The barrenness of our village worship services is not nearly always the fault of the village preacher. He is usually quite untrained in the art of leading worship. With the best will in the world, he does not know how to lead his people into the presence of God. He has usually had neither training nor guidance in planning worship programmes, and he has few materials with which to work. It is true that many excellent books of prayers have been written. In each vernacular such books may be found. Books about prayer and the devotional life are on the shelves of his library. A few good books on the theory of worship are available in the vernaculars. But generally speaking, there is a great dearth of vernacular literature in the field of worship and worship programmes. There are practically no books available to the average village preacher, teacher or layman from which he may learn to conduct public worship.

There are excellent hymnals in which the Church's rich treasure of song from every race and tongue has accumulated through the ages. Indians like Narayan Vaman Tilak have given the Church a priceless heritage of noble Christian song. In many areas of India the treasures of the Gospel of Christ are offered to the thirsty millions in vessels of song from which they love to drink. The familiar *bhajan*, *kirtan*, *abhang* and *kalakshepam* (various forms of religious lyrics and songs) have become the vessels for the water of life, and villagers as well as high-caste peoples listen all night long with absorbed interest to the great stories of Christ sung in these familiar and well-loved forms.

There is to-day a remarkable awakening to the need for advance in the field of Christian worship. The National as well

¹ Indian Witness.

as the provincial Christian Councils, and many devoted servants of the Church are giving much time and thought to the preparation and publishing of appropriate forms of worship for all kinds and conditions of Churches. Some notable work has already been done. This little book is an attempt to provide a simple handbook of worship which will help the village preacher, teacher or layman to understand this great function of the Church and to conduct worship with dignity and grace. It seeks to point the way to some of the materials which may be used in the worship of God. It is the author's hope that it may help in some small way to point the millions of India's Christian villagers to the Christ who said, "They that worship Him, should worship in spirit and in truth. . . . The Father seeketh such."

SUGGESTIONS FOR USING THIS BOOK

A.—FOR ALL WHO LEAD THE WORSHIP OF VILLAGE CHURCHES.—
Pastors, Teachers, Evangelists, Laymen.

1. Study the chapters in Part One carefully until the glory and greatness of your privilege as a leader of worship, a true priest to your people, dawns upon you.
2. In consultation with the local leaders of your Church, select an order of worship from Part Two for your regular services. Teach your people the responses and the order until all can join in freely and with true understanding of the meaning of every part. Use it at least six months regularly, or make it your permanent order of service.
3. Within the framework of this order of service, choose your hymns, the Bible readings, and prepare carefully your prayers in harmony with the theme of the message which you will give.
4. Use the suggested programmes for special occasions and festivals through the year. Prepare early. Teach your people their part in the order. Begin early enough so that all can take part with enthusiasm and understanding when the time comes. For the great festivals, a month's time is needed for thorough preparation.

B.—FOR SEMINARIES, TRAINING SCHOOLS, AND INSTITUTES.

1. Use the first part as a basis for the study of the Principles of Public Worship.
2. Follow up carefully and to the limit of your time the suggestions for further reading and study given at the end of each chapter.
3. Some advanced students should conduct research into the available worship materials in the vernacular of your area. Others should search out from the devotional writings of Hindu and Mohammedan saints the materials—songs, prayers, etc., which can be used in Christian worship.
4. Try out the suggested orders of service, and the programmes for the observance of Christian festivals in village Christian groups. Make such adaptations as may be required for the Christians of your area.
5. Plan a full church year in accord with the seasons and seasonal work of your province.

C.—FOR LITERATURE COMMITTEES OR TRANSLATORS.

1. A careful compilation of all available literature on worship in your vernacular should be made and added to the bibliography, or substituted for it.
2. Wherever special hymns or musical settings for Biblical materials are suggested in this book, such materials available in the vernacular hymnals and worship literature should be freely substituted or added.
3. Portions of Part Two, especially the programmes for the Christian festivals should be widely distributed, especially through the vernacular Church press. Such programmes might be issued as reprints also, so that they may be used in all village Churches, by all the worshippers. I would suggest this as a means of getting the programmes into real use throughout the villages.

D.—FOR CHURCH COUNCILS.

Each Church Council within a language area might select one or two orders of worship and with it a few other programmes or items of special worship material, and print them as a small booklet of worship on durable paper, to be distributed free or at low cost to all Christians who can read, so that they may be used in the regular services, and kept in the hymnal or songbook used. I would suggest the following materials for such a booklet:

An order for Sunday services.

Programme for morning and evening daily prayer.

A service of sacred silence.

A suggested programme for family prayer.

A few brief suggestive prayers for use in family worship.

The Lords Prayer.

The Creed.

This material might be printed in large type, clearly spaced and marked so that the semi-literate Christian can easily follow it.

CHAPTER II

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN WE WORSHIP

As the bride looks back to the mother's house,
And goes, but with lagging feet;
So my soul looks up to thee and longs,
That thou and I may meet.

As a child cries out and is sore distressed,
When its mother it cannot see;
As a fish that is taken from out the wave,
So 'tis, says Tuka, with me.

—*Tukaram*.¹

WHAT really happens when we worship God? What does it mean to worship? What is this wonderful experience which has power to transform the life and change the destiny of the humblest villager as well as the most cultured? Why does this experience so change individual Christians and the divine society called the church that they become strong, pure, life-changing agencies in the village community and in the state? There must be here some great dynamic that makes all things new.

WHAT IS TRUE WORSHIP?

Deep in every human heart is a hunger and thirst for God. It is there from earliest childhood, and it imperiously demands satisfaction. No life can be complete nor integrated unless this hunger and thirst for God are satisfied. It is beautifully expressed in the poignant prayer of Saint Augustine, "O God, our hearts are homesick until they rest in thee, for thou hast made them for thyself." It is the hunger which appears in the beautiful prayer of Tukaram, quoted at the beginning of this chapter. This hunger of the soul may not be gainsaid. The confusion and complexity of our modern life, both in town

¹ From *Psalms of the Maratha Saints*, by Nicol MacNicol. Association Press, Calcutta, 1919. p. 56. By permission of Publisher.

and country, demand that each man must have within himself deep wells of power and poise and spiritual peace in order that he may adequately deal with life's problems. We can see about us everywhere the evidences of this need. On every hand we see worry, fear, dread, suffering both merited and unmerited, insecurity, tensions between various groups and classes, the pitiful tragedy of those who have lost the anchor of faith. How desperately we all need a life-changing, calming, strengthening touch with God!

Now true worship is that transforming experience with God. At its highest and best, it is the soul's approach to God in wonder, adoration, love, and communion. The very heart and essence of the experience is prayer. There is a beautiful saying of Jesus which suggests the underlying idea of worship. This saying is not found in the Gospels, but was only discovered in the sands of the Nile in 1903. It is very probably authentic, and it certainly breathes the very spirit of the Master. It is this: "Let not him that seeketh cease from his quest until he find. Finding, he shall wonder. Wondering, he shall find the Kingdom. And finding the Kingdom, he shall rest." It is this sense of wonder—wonder at the love, the tenderness, the power, the grandeur and holiness of God, that brings us to His feet in worship. It is the very foundation of worship in our hearts.

Worship, then, is the response of the human soul to the brooding tenderness, the matchless love, the pure holiness, and the awesome majesty of God. It issues in wonder, love, and praise. To worship means to open the doors of our hearts and to commune with God. It is the response to Christ's invitation, "Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him, and sup with him, and he with me." Worship is an experience in which we consciously join our hearts with the Eternal, and the currents of the spirit flow between the human soul and the divine. It cannot be one-sided. We believe that the Father seeketh such worshippers as will worship him in spirit and in truth; that when we call upon Him, he will answer us; and that when

we wait in patience for God only, he will hear our cry and come unto us.

In a sense, the experience of worship is the celebration of the soul's experience with God. Someone has called it the drama of the soul's adventure with God. In it we live through our contacts with him, and renew the well-springs of eternal life within us. Each true experience of worship, then, recapitulates the divine-human relationship. Furthermore, it is sometimes called an offering to God. The idea underlying this concept is that man's chief end is to glorify God, and that God desires this offering of praise and homage from his creatures. This conception of worship has elements of truth, but it does not exhaust the truth. Our tribute of worship is a very real and worthy offering to Him. But we believe that God reciprocates and draws nigh unto them who approach him with humble and contrite hearts.

In the experience with God in worship, we celebrate fellowship with Him, and enjoy for a time the infinite grace of His presence. But this is not the whole story. At the same time, worship is the highest possible form of our association with our fellow-men. In private devotion, the sense of fellowship with kindred souls is strong, and there comes a heightened consciousness of the social implications of our belief in and fellowship with God. We often find when we look at God that he is looking at our brothers. But when we worship with others, this aspect of worship becomes more pronounced. The quality and depth of human friendship or association depends upon the integrity and kind of the foundations for that association. Friendship among thieves is a precarious thing, because generally it is based upon a dishonest and untrustworthy foundation. The associations growing out of our contacts with men in earning honestly our daily bread are far more likely to be lasting and secure. But the associations growing out of our pursuit of the very highest things in the highlands of the spirit, are the strongest and noblest associations of all. To join with our fellow-Christians in the worship of God in Christ is to strengthen immeasurably the ties of Christian brother-

hood and friendship. The experience of joint worship of God is one of the finest possible ways of developing that joyous sense of oneness that was so characteristic of the church in its early days in Jerusalem. The age-long experience of the church has confirmed this fact, and it can and will be one of the strongest means of building in India the Kingdom of God.

THE RESULTS OF WORSHIP

The worship of God in Christ has certain important and far-reaching consequences. The changed and enriched lives of individual Christians, their deeper love for each other, their spirit of brotherhood, their eagerness to witness for Christ, and above all the radiance of their personal Christian character are the major products of the emphasis on real worship.

If our contact with God in worship is real, it will bring about vast changes in our inner lives and in our relations with our fellowmen. There comes to the true worshipper through this communion with God new power to win victory over every kind of sin and temptation. There arises within him a new purity and holiness of heart, which is the direct result of contact with a God in Christ who is spotlessly pure and holy beyond our highest dreams of him. The experience will liberate us from our sins and fears; it will release within us spiritual energies and prepare within us a highway for God. It will reveal to us higher values than we have known. It will give to us clarified mental and spiritual vision. It will rest the nerves. It will give us ethical insight, and a challenge to self-sacrificing and devoted social action. It will create fellowship and identify us with the saints and heroes of the church of today, and will make us partakers of the heritage of noble lives lived in the nineteen centuries of Christian history. These are some of the deeper results of true Christian worship in the lives of the worshipper.

Bishop Pickett points out in *Christian Mass Movements in India* some of the specific beneficial social changes that have been brought about by the practise of regular, satisfying worship of God by the village church. Some of the more important of these social changes may be noted here.

1. *A Notable Increase in Self-respect.*—The old debasing inferiority complex departs. Manhood is restored, and new and unsuspected powers are discovered in the lives of those who for thousands of years have had to be the victims of the old caste system and its disabilities. No longer do these worshipping Christians feel that they are mere beasts. They are conscious of becoming the children of God, and as his children they rise to walk in newness of life.

2. *Greater Occupational Variation.*—Those Christians who by the old caste system were bound for life to certain degrading traditional occupations have through this newness of life and new self-respect found that there are new and better fields of work opening up to them. Their sons are entering and conquering new types of occupations and the professions.

3. *Unselfishness.*—With the development of real worship comes a marked increase in the eagerness of the village Christians to share the blessings of the new life with their neighbours, relatives and friends. This unselfish sharing spirit leads them to share with those who had oppressed them as well as with those unfortunates upon whom they themselves had looked with contempt. The implications of this for evangelistic witnessing are clear.

4. *New Respect from other Communities.*—The Hindu and Mohammedan neighbours of worshipping Christians have far more respect for them than they have for those who do not worship. The dignity of Christian worship wins real respect for the worshippers.

5. *Cleanliness and Appreciation of Beauty.*—Where regular and satisfying worship takes place, there is a transformation in the outward appearance of the place of worship, the worshipper himself, and his home and surroundings. Cleanliness and love of beauty come with it. Village Christians soon discover that they cannot worship God in the beauty of holiness and a dirty shirt, nor with uncombed hair. Nor can they contentedly go back from worship to a house and grounds that are filthy and unkempt. So the result of worship is cleanliness and beauty, flower gardens, and clean clothes.

6. *Women take a Prominent part in Church life.*—Vital Christian worship has given the village churches a new sense of the dignity of womankind, and has brought them to the front in many aspects of church life and work.

7. *Love for Education.*—The man who attends regular Christian worship in which every worshipper can and should take active part, cannot contentedly remain illiterate. Nor can he tolerate illiteracy in his family or in his church or village. Worshipping Christians love to learn, and they send their children to school.

8. *Better Marriage Customs.*—It has been found that the evils of child marriage and conformity to old tribal customs or heathen rites are far less among the churches that have regular vital worship.

9. *Less Participation in Heathen Festivals.*—Wherever emphasis has been placed upon the observance of joyous Christian festivals and satisfying and life-giving worship, there has been little tendency to participate in the degrading aspects of the heathen festivals which are so large a part of the social life of the village.

It will be seen that these beneficial social changes are not the mere theorizing of someone with devout hopes, nor the idle dream of wishful thinking but are the changes actually observed where a strong program of worship is now being carried on. These social changes may be called some of the by-products of Christian worship. It has been found that to produce these by-products, it is not enough to have a strong program of religious teaching, nor to have high standards for admission to the church or to the communion. These changes come about more largely through the instrumentality of Christian worship than through teaching or pastoral care, or any other factor.

WORSHIP AND CHRISTIAN BROTHERHOOD

It is illuminating to compare the various types of worship in India. Let us go to Benares or Hardwar and watch our Hindu brethren worship. There may be vast crowds of worshippers,

yet all worship is primarily individualistic. The multitude is a crowd; it is not a congregation. Each man worships for himself alone. There is no lack of devotion. But there is no likelihood of the development in this kind of worship of any social passion and love for others, or of any deep sense of solidarity and brotherhood. It is individual worship, even when performed in the midst of a vast milling crowd.

On the other hand, Islam does have joint worship. To see twenty-five thousand Moslems kneel and prostrate themselves toward Mecca in the Jumma Masjid in Delhi is a sight one can never forget. And we Christians can learn much of reverence from them. But where are the women? Are they not also children of God? Why must they be excluded from the highest and noblest religious exercise of the community of the Faithful? Here is suggested then one of the noblest values of Christian worship. There is in it perfect fellowship. For "There can be neither Jew nor Greek, there can be neither bond nor free, there can be no male and female; for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." (Gal. 3:28.) We may learn from our Hindu brethren the beauty of personal devotion to God, and from our Mohammedan friends reverence of the name and holiness of God. But we have much to give. In the perfect fellowship of Christian worship, all distinctions of sex, age, wealth, culture, education, position, race, caste, and colour are laid aside, yea wiped out; and we approach the throne of God together as his dear children. In this fellowship we have a priceless treasure to give to India.

THE PATTERN OF WORSHIP

There are, of course, a great many types of Christian worship, varying according to temperament, doctrinal background, cultural heritage, custom, and heredity. Many are the approaches to the gates of the Holy City. But in all these varied types of worship, the consciousness of God's presence is central. Elaborate ritual in the chancel of a stately cathedral, the solemn hush of a service of silent prayer in a plain meeting-house, the joyous song and quiet simple prayer of a village

congregation worshipping in a thatched hut or under the shade of a spreading tamarind tree, are diversities of ministrations indeed, but they may be in the same Spirit, and full of the consciousness of the same Lord. Everything that makes this consciousness more real has a place in worship. Anything that obscures this consciousness is out of place, and is a hindrance.

When we try to analyze the experience of worship, it becomes evident that it follows certain definite paths. These elements or steps in worship have been analyzed and outlined in various ways. A study of some of the worship experiences of Bible characters is highly interesting. One of the most penetrating students of the art of worship, Dean Willard Sperry, in his book, *Reality in Worship*, suggests that there are three main parts to every service of true worship. They are the chief essentials in every program of worship. These are the parts he suggests: First, a direct call to worship, and the celebration of some one of the attributes of God. Second, there will follow naturally a statement and recognition of precisely those aspects of our nature which are suggested by contrast with that attribute of God. And third, there will be the central devotional act of rededication.

The call of the prophet Isaiah, as recorded in Isaiah 6, is one of the simplest and yet most perfect examples and patterns of true worship to be found in the Bible or in any other literature. At the beginning of the experience, Isaiah, the young prophet-prince of Jerusalem, is grieving over the death of his counsellor and older friend, King Uzziah. He was in the Temple, in a receptive and meditative mood. It is in this mood that the transforming experience of God's presence can be felt. Then while Isaiah was waiting, there came to him the matchless vision of the majesty and holiness of God. This is the first step in every true experience of worship. To the waiting heart, God grants a vision.

The result of this vision was that Isaiah fell on his face before the splendid vision of the glory of God. He recognized in the flash of divine light his own unworthiness and unclean-

ness. Is it not always so? The vision of God's holiness reveals our impurity, his strength our weakness, his love our hardness of heart, his beauty our unloveliness, his grace our pettiness. So the second step of the experience of worship is this humbling realization of our unworthiness and need. And in penitence we confess our sin and weakness.

Let us see then what happens to the penitent prophet. An angel comes, and taking the tongs lifts a live coal from the altar and touches its purifying fire to his lips, and he is flooded with the consciousness that his iniquity is purged and his sin taken away. This cleansing and the certain knowledge that we have been cleansed is the third step in the worship experience. And the inevitable result of this overpowering experience of the gracious pardoning touch of God is a flood of praise and gratitude pouring forth from our hearts. We must sing with the psalmist, "O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good; For his mercy endureth forever!"

The next step in worship is instruction, or commission. We have seen the vision of God. Humbled by the splendour of God, we fall at his feet in penitence. Then we feel his pardoning and cleansing touch, and we break forth in praise and exultation. It is now that we are ready to hear the voice of God calling and commissioning us for his service. We recall the needs of others, and hear God's will for them and for us in relation to them. He shows us his plan for them. It was at this stage that Isaiah heard the words, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Again we respond to this call of God, and with the prophet, we say, "Here am I; send me!" This is the step of dedication of our lives to the work and the Kingdom of God. It is the sixth step in worship.

The seventh and last step is the benediction of peace. It is the peace that can come only to a surrendered and directed life and heart. It came in floods to the soul of Isaiah when he dedicated himself to his ministry as an ambassador of God. It is God's final gift to us in the service of worship, and with it we go forth from his presence, renewed, strengthened, with a high purpose to do God's will.

This then is a pattern of perfect and complete worship. Let us look again at the seven steps in the experience:

Vision of God.

Humility.

Pardon and Strengthening.

Praise and recollection.

Commission—revealing of the will of God.

Dedication.

Peace.

Into this pattern may be fitted the various elements of song, Scripture readings, prayers, responses, creeds, teaching, and offerings which make up the order of worship. They all have their place in this pattern. They are the vehicles through which we express and through which God expresses to us the various steps of the true worship experience.

It will be noted that there is in this pattern of worship a principle of alternation. First God gives us a vision of himself. We respond in humble penitence. He in turn grants us pardon and new life. We respond with songs of praise. God speaks again, revealing his will that we carry these blessings of pardon and grace to others. We respond, dedicating our lives and our all to the tasks and program he sets for us. And finally comes his benediction of peace. The first step may be taken through a call to worship or a hymn. The second is normally prayer. The third may be expressed in prayer, hymns of praise or reading from the psalms. The fourth is expressed in hymns of praise and the Gloria. In the fifth comes intercessory prayer, Bible readings, and the sermon. The offering may represent the sixth, with prayer, and the benediction or closing prayer of a service may make the last step real to the worshippers.

There is a further principle of movement or progression in the pattern of worship. A true experience of worship will take us from where we are, tired, confused, doubting, worried, and will carry us step by step into the radiant presence of God, from which we shall emerge refreshed, straightened, integrated, and full of power. The lines of Archbishop

Trench's beautiful sonnet on Prayer express what the experience of worship can do for us:

"Lord, what a change within us one short hour
Spent in thy presence will avail to make!
What heavy burdens from our bosoms take;
What parched grounds refresh, as with a shower!
We kneel, and all around us seem to lower;
We rise, and all the distance and the near
Stands forth in sunny outline, brave and clear!
We kneel, how weak! we rise, how full of power! . . ."

We move forward into the Holy of Holies of God's presence, we receive His power and peace, and we can go forth conquering and to conquer.

It should be the aim of those who lead in worship to ensure that this glorious experience comes to every worshipper, whether man, woman, or child, in the service which he conducts. And it may thus become the common experience of all. It is true that we approach the experience of worship in differing moods. At times we may feel like entering at once into the spirit of praise. But the path of the human spirit in its communion with God is generally as we have shown it here. In any given congregation the dominant mood is likely to demand following this pattern.

Worship is indeed too deep and ineffable an experience to be coldly analyzed. It is far beyond our power to describe adequately. Nevertheless, as we consider the paths of our own spirits and of worshippers and mystics through the ages, we find help and guidance in preparing for our high tasks as leaders of worship. It is our high privilege so to order the conditions and atmosphere of the worship experience that the people of our churches, entirely forgetting us, may through the programs we have planned and our unobtrusive guidance, come into the presence of God, and have their own souls illumined by "The Light that never was on sea or land."

THE FINAL TEST

What is the final test of an experience of worship? It is in the last analysis this: Has it had any effect in making the

worshippers more like Jesus Christ? For we believe that he who is like Christ is like God. His faith and good cheer, his confidence in the power of love, his tender compassion for all the suffering and oppressed, his willingness to accept the cross of sacrifice for the redemption of the world, his utter goodness, should and will show in the lives of those who worship him in spirit and in truth. Such transformations take time, but the change should become increasingly evident with each recurrence of the experience of worship. To provide the occasion and the setting for such a transformation in the lives of the toiling village Christians is the high task and privilege of the leader of worship in the village church. And we may thank God and rejoice, for there is no higher task in all of God's world than this.

Suggestions for Further Study of Chapter II

1. Study the worship experiences of these Bible characters, and analyze them carefully:

Jacob. Genesis 28:10-22; 32:22-32.

Moses. Exodus 3 and 4.

David. Psalms 27, 51.

Jeremiah. Jeremiah 1.

The Samaritan Woman. John 4.

Peter. Luke 5:1-11; Acts 10.

Paul. Acts 9, 16.

2. Discuss with an understanding Hindu or Mohammedan friend what the experience of worship means in his life.

3. Make an investigation of the social and spiritual changes brought about by the practise of worship in the churches with which you are acquainted.

4. Using *Studying Worship By the Project Method* (E. L. King, Lucknow Publishing House), study the various forms of worship carried on by all kinds of people in your area.

CHAPTER III

MATERIALS OF WORSHIP AND THEIR USE

Of all I have, oh Saviour sweet,—
All gifts, all skill, all thoughts of mine,—
A living garland I entwine,
And offer at thy lotus feet.

—*Narayan Vaman Tilak*.¹

IN various ages and lands the materials used in worship have varied greatly. But there has always been this universal need of some vehicle for the communion of the soul with God. In earliest times, the dance and the drama, the offering upon an altar of the fruits of the field or of an animal, have dramatized the approach of the soul to God. Singing and musical instruments were probably first used in some form of worship. Today in some churches elaborate and colourful liturgies lead the worshippers into the highlands of the spirit with God.

The elements most commonly used in worship and which are available to the village church in India are the Scriptures, music, prayers, the sermon, offerings, art and the drama. All of them are useful and some of them are indispensable in giving expression to some part of the pattern of worship we have described, and in bringing the word of God before us. To focus the attention of the worshippers, interpret the objective of worship, provide ways of expressing the feelings of worship, and to clearly present the voice of God, we need to utilize the rich treasures of worship materials which have come down to us.

The church in India has indeed a rich treasury of worship materials upon which she may draw. Not only does she have access in some measure to the rich and vast treasure of hymns, prayers, and religious art of the countries which for many centuries have been Christian, and which are the common

¹ From *Poems of Narayan Vaman Tilak*, J. C. Winslow, Ed. Association Press, Calcutta. By permission.

heritage of East and West, but she also has access to and may legitimately claim for her own the inexhaustible riches of the culture of India. This land has a very rich treasure of devotional literature and some of religious art which may be used by the Christian church. It is the high privilege of the church in India to unite these two great streams of devotional materials and bring about a new and beautiful and rich cultus of Christian worship, superior to any we have yet known in India. The Indian church has a great contribution to make the Church universal in the field of worship, and she has begun to make it. It is of the utmost importance that Indian Christian scholars and leaders shall give much of their time and thought to developing Christian worship that is Christian and Indian. The water of life must be offered to India in an Indian cup. And surely it is pleasing to God that in the forms and ways that are natural and at home in India the church should offer to Him her cup of adoration and praise.

There are certain general principles which we need to follow in the selection of materials for worship, for the village church in India. In the first place, nothing shoddy or unworthy may have a place in the worship of God. With such a wealth of worthy materials, it is almost an affront to God to worship Him with less than the best we can find. Only hymns of real beauty, dignity, and with a real message, only prayers that have been thought out carefully and are made in the best language of which we are capable, only pictures which have a real message can be used in worship. It was a true instinct of the Hebrews which made them offer only the finest unblemished animals for sacrifice to Jehovah!

In the second place, as we have indicated above, we should use as much really Indian material as we can in making up our worship programmes. Indian lyrics and tunes, prayers from Indian sources, Indian pictures at times, a house of worship that is not a crude copy of western architectural forms, Indian musical instruments, the use of flowers, lyrical preaching, Christian forms of the ancient village folk-dances as a means of worship—these are a few of the ways in which we

can use the rich heritage of Indian culture; and in the lovely words of Tilak,

"A living garland I entwine,
And offer at thy lotus feet."

The question then arises as to where we shall find these rich treasures of materials for use in worship. The Bible is of course the supreme treasury of worship materials. The psalms, the challenging and inspiring messages of the prophets, the Gospels, the noble letters of the New Testament, are all of supreme value in worship. We shall consider at greater length its place in worship. Then there are the hymnals. In most of the vernacular hymnals there are excellent translations of some of the finest treasures of hymnody that have come down to us through the ages from every land. In it we find the hymns expressing the finest aspirations and prayers and praises of the saints of the church in England, Germany, ancient Greece, America, France, Scotland, Ireland, Italy, India, China, and many other lands. Then too we have books of prayers which have come down to us through many centuries of developing Christian worship. Such books as the *Book of Common Prayer* or *A Chain of Prayer Through the Ages* contain valuable worship materials which may help us all to express our prayers to God.

When we seek Indian materials for use in worship, there is no lack of rich sources. In English, there are some notable collections of poetry, in which there are worthy and beautiful prayers and hymns which the church can use to the great enrichment of its worship. Among these might be mentioned the *Gitanjali* of Rabindranath Tagore, *Psalms of Maratha Saints*, by Nicol Macnicol, *Poems of Narayan Vaman Tilak*, by J. C. Winslow, and the beautiful collection entitled *Temple Bells*, collected by Dr. Appasamy. In the various vernaculars, there is a vast amount of material awaiting our use. In every language area, some Christian scholar might well set out to find and make available some of the treasures of devotion which can be used. Some of the poems and *abhangs* of Tuk-

aram and Tagore approach in beauty and devotional value the psalms of David.

Let us now consider each of the major types of worship material in turn and set forth a few suggestions as to their use.

MUSIC

The Indian church is a singing church, as indeed every church which has captured any nation's heart has been. Every great forward movement in the Christian church has been borne along on the wings of song. Someone has said that in the Protestant reformation, Martin Luther did as much through his chorales as he did in his translation of the Bible. The Wesleyan revival probably owes nearly as much of its great success and widespread and permanent influence to the hymns of Charles Wesley as to the preaching of his more famous brother John. The modern movements which are stirring the church to its depths are singing their way along. There is a reason why music has so prominent a place. It is one of the very finest and most expressive of the handmaidens of religion. It seems to be the natural language of prayer, adoration and praise.

There are two principal kinds of music which we may use—instrumental and vocal. The very first instruments ever made, reed pipes, were probably used to express the feelings of worship in the heart of a lonely shepherd. The harp, the organ, and many other instruments always carry with them the association of stately music of adoration and praise. In India, we can and should make wider use of Indian instruments in our worship. The harmonium too often destroys the beauty of Indian tunes, but if well played, it can probably be used. In the villages, the drums and cymbals and castanets are most useful for accompanying the lilting, rhythmical lyrics which villagers love so well to sing. A singing band such as is now found in so many village churches, which uses these native instruments and perhaps a small harmonium, is not only a great asset in worship, but can do wonderful work in witnessing through a lyrical presentation of the Gospel. We should

make every effort to develop such a singing band in every village Church.

In vocal music, there are also many forms which are distinctly Indian which we may use. Instead of translating many more of the Western hymns in exact western meters, it is far more desirable that the rich messages which are found in these hymns should be thoroughly understood by real Indian poets who will put the substance of them into Indian lyric form. The *bhajans* and *kirtans* of Western India, the *kathas*, the lovely *abhangs* of Marathi poesy, the *kalakshepam* of South India are all forms which are now being used, and which should be still further developed. Another important possibility is that of setting responses, short Bible passages, short prayers and sentences to Indian tunes, that they may be memorized by village Christians and used in worship. One of the great South Indian Churches has had its whole beautiful ritual set to Indian tunes and the worship of that Church is most inspiring and attractive to the real Indian heart.

A word should be said about the selection of hymns to be sung in any service. Careful use should be made of the index in the hymnal. Always the most appropriate hymn, one that expresses the message, and whose tune also fits in with the mood of the service should be chosen. In every Church there should be a singing band or choir, and a good leader, who will lead the congregation in song. In village Churches, everybody should learn the hymns, and take part in their singing. And whenever possible, lyrical preaching, and the witness of Christian song should form a major part of the evangelistic programme of the Church.

PRAYER

Some Churches in India always follow prescribed forms of prayer which are generally the translations of the historic prayers of the Church. At the opposite extreme are those Churches which always use only free spontaneous prayer. Neither of these extremes can have the best possible spirit in the service of worship. The prayers which are read tend to become formal, and even monotonous in spite of their beauty.

In free prayer, there is rarely any adequate preparation, and the prayers too often become a display of the peculiar oratorical powers of the one leading in prayer. We should frequently use the prayers which others have prepared, for they may express some of the deepest needs of our hearts and open new vistas of communion which we or our people have not yet experienced. On the other hand, whenever we use free prayer, it is most important that much time and thought be spent in preparation for it. Even though we do not write our prayers, we must think through the petitions we shall make, the thanksgiving, and the intercession most carefully, in order that the prayers may not be only what we think, but may indeed be the heartfelt yearnings of the whole congregation whom we lead into the presence of God.

The language of prayer must be simple and yet exalted. Abstract theological terms, sonorous Old Testament names for God, and shopworn phrases have no place in real prayer. Our prayers should be brief and to the point. They should deal with the real needs of the people whom we are leading.

There are various kinds of prayer in a service of worship. In the orders of worship in Part Two will be found prayers of invocation, of adoration, of confession, of sin, of petition, and of intercession. All of these forms are important and should be used, and carefully prepared. There are some other forms of prayer which may be used also. The bidding prayer has been found to be much appreciated by village Churches. The congregation prays silently while the leader suggests at brief intervals things for which all should pray. Litanies, in which the people respond with a brief sentence after each petition of the leader's prayer, are also very helpful. We do not make adequate use of silent prayer, in which each worshipper is permitted to commune with God in the silence of his own heart. There should be in every service some time set apart for silent prayer. Hymns of prayer, sung with bowed heads, or kneeling, are a most beautiful form of prayer.

A word should be said about the benediction, which is a form of prayer. This is a solemn invoking of the Holy Spirit

to go with every worshipper to his home and daily tasks as he leaves the house of God. There are several beautiful Biblical benedictions which may be used, among which the following are very commonly used:

Now our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us ever lasting consolation and good hope through grace, comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good work and word. *Amen.*

II Thess. 2:16-17.

Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an eternal covenant, even our Lord Jesus, make you perfect in every good thing to do his will, working in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be the glory forever and ever. *Amen.*

Hebrews 13:20-21.

The Lord watch between me and thee when we are absent one from another. *Amen.*

Genesis 31:49.

The Lord of peace himself give you peace at all times, in all ways. The Lord be with you all. *Amen.*

II Thess. 3:16.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. *Amen.*

II Cor. 13:14.

Grace to you and peace from God the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins, that he might deliver us out of the present evil world, according to the will of our God and Father; to whom be glory forever and ever. *Amen.*

Gal. 1:3-5.

The Lord bless thee and keep thee; the Lord make his face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee; the Lord lift up his countenance upon thee and give thee peace. *Amen.*

Numbers 6:24-26.

Now unto him that is able to guard you from stumbling, and to set you before the presence of his glory without blemish in exceeding joy, to the only God our Savior, be glory, majesty, dominion and power, before all time, and now, and forevermore. *Amen.*

Jude 24-25.

After the benedictions are pronounced, the people should always say *Amen*, and should remain for a short time in silent prayer before going out.

THE BIBLE IN WORSHIP

The Bible is the supreme book of worship, and must have central place in our worship services. For reverent contemplation, inspiring stories of how the saints of other ages have approached and found God, as a sourcebook for meditation, for praise and prayer, and as a revelation of the will of God for to-day and every day of our lives, the Bible stands alone. We should learn to use it profitably and wisely in the service of worship.

In the first place, we must recognize that there are some parts of the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, which because of their remoteness from our present world, or their sub-Christian ethical standards, are not suitable for use in worship. But there is so much that is good that we need not be alarmed about the unsuitable portions.

It is most necessary that we learn to read the Bible well. Before going to the place of worship, the leader should read the passages he intends to read publicly, with great reverence and care, so that he will be able to read with real expression. Bible portions should be selected which strengthen the message which is to be given, or the entire service may center around some inspiring passage.

There are various ways of using the Bible in worship. From it we may select calls to worship to be used at the beginning of the service. These should be verses or sentences which set forth strikingly the attribute of God which we desire to stress. The Psalms and to some extent the prophets are source-books for this kind of material. Then there are various ways of having

the Scripture lesson read. Some types of lesson, especially narrative, should be read with expression by the leader or some other educated person who has prepared beforehand to do so. Lyrical passages may be read responsively, the leader and the congregation alternating, or the two halves of the congregation alternating. Some passages may be read in unison, if they are familiar to the worshippers.

Memoriter work is especially valuable in the villages. Every village Christian, child or adult, even if illiterate, can store his mind over a period of time with some of the great passages like the Beatitudes, Psalms 23, 24, 67, 90, 100, 121; John 3:16; Deut. 6:1-9; Gal. 5:22-24; and others. When they are memorized they should be thoroughly taught, and then frequently used in public worship.

Occasionally the service may center around an expository reading of a passage. This is a useful way to teach Bible lessons and make the Bible live.

THE OFFERING

Too often the offering is merely a collection, and is not a real part of the worship service. As we have seen in studying the pattern of worship, dedication of our lives and our selves is one of the most important steps in the true experience of worship. The offering should represent the dedication of life and time and talents as well as wealth. With what reverence we should give and receive it! It should have a real place in every service, and be planned for as carefully as any other part of the service. The people should be taught and encouraged to consider the offering a vital part of worship, and to realize that they should never come empty-handed to the house of God.

In village Churches where money is always scarce or its possession at best seasonal, giving in kind should be encouraged. The vessel of blessing, the Lord's acre, the Lord's hen or goat or cow, all these suggest ways in which the villager may dedicate something he has to God, and have something, whether an egg, a chicken, some fruit, some grain, some hand-woven cloth or hand-spun yarn to give at every service. We

shall not enter deeply into this subject here; but it is important that every village Christian look upon giving to the Lord as a joyous privilege of his worship experience.

The offering may be received by elders or stewards who will pass a neat brass tray or hand-woven basket kept for this purpose while a hymn of dedication is being reverently sung. Another impressive way of receiving the offering is for the leader to speak slowly and impressively certain verses from the Bible on giving, while the congregation reverently file to the front of the place of worship and lay their gifts on the altar. Such verses may be found in Psalm 24:1; 51:15-17; 65; Proverbs 3:9-10; Isaiah 58:13-14; 9:6-7; 11:9; Micah 6:6-8; Matt. 6:19-21; 7:7-11; 6:30-33; 7:24-27; Romans 12:1-2; I Cor. 16:2,13-14; II Cor. 8:9-12; Gal. 5:22,23; I Tim. 1:14; James 1:17. When the offerings have been placed on the altar, the congregation should sing the Doxology, and the leader may offer a brief prayer of dedication.

THE SACRAMENT OF SACRED SILENCE

"Be still and know that I am God!" How rarely in our services do we heed that call! We frequently use as a call to worship the noble words of Habakkuk, "The Lord is in his holy temple: let all the earth keep silence before him," and then we do not permit a moment's silence until after the benediction is pronounced! Silent adoration and meditation is not only a wonderful channel of the spirit in worship, but it appeals to the Indian heart. Why do we not use it more? There should be a quiet time, for meditation and adoration and hearing the voice of God, in every service. It can be carried out in any one of the orders of service printed in Part Two of this book. But in addition to that, there should be occasional services in which the sacrament of sacred silence is the main part of the service, its climax. Such an order of worship will be found also. The elements of silent worship are meditation, silent prayer, self-examination before God, holy revery and unspoken adoration.

One communion, the Friends or Quakers, always make the sacrament of silence the most prominent part of their worship.

It will be illuminating to read what a Friend says of it as worship:

"It is in silence that the congregation gathers and sits in expectation of an experience to satisfy the soul. If the silence is accompanied by weariness of mind or by distracted thoughts upon secular matters, the silence is *spiritually dead*; but if the silence is that of thirsty souls supported by concentrated and intelligent thought upon spiritual matters, then the silence is a *living silence*, from which will flow exhortation or supplication to the help or comfort of the hearers. . . . There is a spiritual unity produced in silent worship which is a familiar experience to any Friend and which constitutes one of his dearest possessions."¹

Our village Christians will need to be trained in the use of silence. And whenever it is used, suggestions for meditation and prayer should be made so that the silence will not be that of an empty mind, but that of rich and uplifting consciousness of the presence of God, who speaks in a still small voice. "My soul, wait thou in silence for God only."

PICTURES

We all know how village people love pictures. It is a true instinct within them which causes them to love graphic representation of the truths they seek to learn. In the worship of God, too, pictures have an important place. Certainly one of the best ways to make a place of worship attractive and worshipful is to have within it a few good worshipful pictures. There is a prejudice in some sections of India against the use of pictures, lest our non-Christian friends should think we worship the pictures and are idolaters. This objection is of doubtful validity, and of scarcely enough weight to justify our depriving the village Churches of the inspiration which good religious pictures bring.

In worship they have a real place, in attracting the thoughts toward God, or making real and graphic some lessons we try

¹ W. W. Comport, "The Friends' Theory of Worship," *The Christian Century*, March 19, 1930. By permission.

to teach. The world is full of great pictures which can be used in worship. In fact, the very greatest art in western countries is religious art. The highest genius of the painters and sculptors of Europe was spent on pictures and statues of Christ and the Madonna and the Apostles and martyrs and saints of the Church. Let us use this rich heritage. And to-day, there is a growing treasure of Indian Christian pictures which are very attractive and beautiful. These pictures may be used in worship to build those moods which are the home atmosphere of the spirit.

Beautiful pictures, suitable for use in Churches and in worship programs are now available and cheap. One of the finest of worship pictures is the new picture, *Christ the Dawn*, painted by the Indian artist Mr. A. D. Thomas. It may be had from the Bombay Book and Tract Society, Bombay. Many other good pictures may be secured there. The pictures by Harold Copping, Miss Wood, and William Hole, all of which may be secured there, are of particularly great value for Indian Churches. Other pictures may be secured very cheaply for village homes and Churches from the Lucknow Publishing Company, Lucknow. Larger and more expensive pictures may be secured from the Y.M.C.A. Publishing House, Calcutta. And finally I should like to call attention to the Portfolio of Indian Art which has some beautiful Indian pictures with suggestions for their use in worship, which is available from the Oxworth Book Service, Jubbulpore.

THE SERMON

In many Protestant Churches, the sermon is given such a prominent place in worship, that everything else is considered merely preliminary, and of little worth. We have come far enough in this study to see that God has many other ways of revealing himself to the worshipper than through the sermon; yet it has a very important place. The recovery of real worship will do much to give the sermon a fair chance! If through all the period of worship that precedes the sermon, the worshipper actively participates and worships, he will be ready and eager to hear God speak through the sermon.

This is not a treatise on homiletics so we will make only a few brief suggestions about the sermon. It must first of all be considered a part of the worship program, and not the whole. It must fit into its place in the pattern of worship as one of the means by which God speaks to us. Its purpose is to mediate the word of God to men, and to prepare their hearts to receive it. It should be brief, earnest, carefully prepared and always on such a subject which will meet the real needs of the people. It is not an opportunity for the display of wit and humour nor entertainment. It is a high and holy thing, and should be prepared with reverence and prayer.

DRAMA

Drama may only occasionally be used in worship, and then with the greatest care. It is a wonderful agency for teaching, but in worship, we must not be play-actors: we must be ourselves before God. Occasionally a Bible story or incident may be put on in the form of drama or pantomime or pageant. But there is no place whatever in the service for what Indian youth loves to call "farce." There is a great field for development and use of drama in religious education, for the villages, but its place in worship must always be negligible.

THE CREED

Many Churches use the Apostles Creed or Nicene Creed regularly in worship. As a means of strengthening and affirming faith it has a real place. Some Churches may like to use one or other of the brief Creeds in the language of Scripture which are found in some of the orders of worship in Part Two. If a Church uses the creed, it should be thoroughly taught and understood, and carefully memorized so that it can be spoken in unison with dignity and feeling.

Suggestions for Further Study of Chapter III

1. Make a study of the vernacular literature at your command, seeking out all hymns, prayers, etc., which may be used in Christian worship.
2. What proportion of the hymns in your vernacular hymnal are Indian, i.e., not mere translations of Western hymns? What proportion are sung to Indian tunes?
3. Collect Indian pictures from current magazines or elsewhere, which may be used in worship.
4. Study the use of flowers in worship in other religions, and in the Churches which you know. How can they best be used in our worship?
5. Write out the prayers you will use in conducting a service of worship. Study the language and ideas you use, for simplicity, feeling, beauty, appropriateness and adaptation to the people whom you are leading in worship.
6. Collect from Psalms and other books a number of sentences which may be used as Calls to Worship.
7. Set the Beatitudes, or other metrical prose from the New Testament, to Indian music.
8. Search out from your hymnal the hymns which can be used as prayers.
9. Plan ways in which the service of giving in your Church may be made more attractive and worshipful.

CHAPTER IV

HOW TO PLAN A WORSHIP PROGRAM

IF worship is to bear its proper fruit in the lives of our village Christians we must put much time and thought into the planning of the worship experience. A good order of worship is a work of art. Slipshod or hasty preparation will never achieve the results we seek. Certain fundamental principles must be followed in our preparation. In the liturgical churches, the order is prescribed and there is little latitude for the choice and discretion of the leader of worship; yet in the selection of his theme, the hymns and call to worship, and to some extent in the preparation of his prayers and the selection of Scripture passages, he has some leeway, and there is need for the most careful preparation.

The use of such guides to worship as Part Two of this book, the Book of Common Prayer, and other source-books has a two-fold value. We may use directly from them such orders of service and programs as may be adapted to our congregations. Furthermore a careful study of the orders and programs there to be found will reveal the principles of creative worship upon which they are based. In addition to such aids, every leader of worship should keep a file of worship materials, into which he will put all clippings of prayers, poems, programs, stories, pictures and suggestions for worship which he may find in his reading. Often the vernacular church papers carry much useful material which could in this way be preserved.

The first principle to be followed in planning the service of worship is *unity*. A theme should be selected for the service that will meet some specific need of the congregation, or that will be in harmony with the appropriate season of the church year. Every part of the service will then have reference to this central theme. The call to worship, the hymns, prayers, Scripture lessons and the spoken message will each in its way tend to deepen the impression of the theme, and the whole service will have real unity, and will not be a hodge-podge of unrelated acts.

The second principle is that of *continuity*. Rather than skipping merrily about from one unrelated subject to another there should be a regular sequence of related subjects about which the worship programs are constructed. This makes possible sustained interest and a continuous program of teaching. The adoption of the church year plan followed by some churches, or the one suggested in Chapter V will insure such continuity. The plan of supplying all leaders of worship with a regular, carefully thought out year's program of worship themes and subjects for teaching which is followed in the Church of India, Burma and Ceylon, especially in the Diocese of Dornakal, is an excellent example of this. The year's course of worship suggestion prepared by Dr. C. D. Rockey of the M. E. church is another well-planned course which will insure this necessary continuity.

The third principle to be followed is that of *Variation*. Absolute sameness of arrangement tends to become monotonous. There should be sufficient sameness so that the service will seem familiar to the worshippers and they will be able to follow and participate properly; but there needs to be a certain amount of freshness and variety in arrangement so that it never becomes stale and old to them. After using an order of service several months, minor changes can be made, or a different order adopted. Furthermore, in the choice made for each service of hymns, responses, lessons, and in their arrangement, there is sufficient latitude so that unless the leader is careless or lazy, there need be no lack of variety and freshness in the services.

The fourth principle is *sharing*. All the worshippers must be given adequate opportunity to participate actively in the service. In the responses, litanies, hymns, prayers, and, in fact, in practically every part of the orders suggested in this book the worshipper is constantly and actively and intelligently participating in the service. The humblest worshipper is permitted to take an active part. He need not sit passively watching the preacher worship. The importance of this principle can scarcely be overestimated.

Another principle to be observed is that of proper *balance*.

There must be a proper proportion between the various parts of the service. This precludes any attempt on the part of the preacher to monopolize the major portion of the time for his sermon. It insures that there will be in each service ample time allowed for prayer, praise, confession, meditation, and hearing the voice of God through other channels. Neither will it deny the preacher a reasonable amount of time for the proclaiming of his message. It insures that God will be given adequate time really to speak to the hearts of his people.

In Chapter II we have observed already two further principles to be followed in planning the service of worship, *alternation and movement*. The alternation referred to there was the alternation between God and man, of vision and response. A further application of the principle in planning the order of service will provide for alternation between minister and people in the responses, responsive readings, Amens, chanting and other parts of the service. The use of the commandments and the beatitudes is another example of the following of this principle, where the minister speaks the first part of each beatitude, and the congregation speaks or sings the second half; or in the commandments, where the minister may speak the commandment and the people respond, "Lord, give us grace to observe this thy holy law," or other appropriate response. There must also be progressive movement in the service. It must be so planned that it will take the worshippers from where they are and carry them forward to a definite climax in their communion with God.

In planning for the service, the leader should keep in mind the various groups and kinds of people who will be present in the service. If there are to be children present, the service must be planned so it will not be over their heads. At the same time it must meet the needs of the adults who will be present. There may be some special feature planned for the children, or some of the hymns may be sung by the children alone. A special story for the little folks, or a certain portion of the sermon may be directed especially to them. And frequently there should be services of worship which are planned entirely for the children, in which they may freely participate.

How then shall we proceed to plan the service of worship?

1. *The leader's preparation of prayer.* This is the first and most important step in preparation. This is a high and holy task. Think: we are to lead our people into the very presence of Almighty God, and so arrange the order and the conditions that no one will miss the vision of His presence nor fail to hear His voice. The most important preparation for this task we can make is that we first of all become spiritually ready and alert, through hours of earnest communion with God. How can any man lead his brother into the presence of God if he himself through long practise know not the way? So let this be the first step—many days beforehand, and every day, that we spend much time in communion with God. Without this, anything else we do will smack of empty formalism and hypocrisy. With it, we may see miracles of transformed lives as we time after time lead our people surely along familiar roads in the light of his presence.

2. Now sit down with your Bible, hymnal, service book, and file of worship materials, for several hours of unhurried and thoughtful planning.

3. Select carefully the theme for the worship service, either the one which naturally comes in the Church year, or one especially suited to the present needs of your congregation.

4. Choose the order of service that you will follow, or make an outline of one. Write it out with ample space for corrections and filling in the parts to be chosen.

5. Compare the outline you have made with the pattern of perfect worship. See the outline below, which shows how the various parts of the service may express the various steps in the perfect worship experience.

6. Choose a call to worship, hymns and Scripture lessons that will at the same time fit into the pattern of worship and will be in perfect harmony with the special theme you have chosen.

7. Give much thought to each prayer that will be used. Do not memorize the prayers, but think out every petition, and every cause for thanksgiving. Recall all those for whom intercessory prayer should be made. Make notes.

8. Make adequate preparation of the sermon or message.
9. Confer with the person who leads the singing, so that he may know what is to be sung and prepare for it.
10. Practice several times reading the Scripture lessons aloud.

**The Pattern of Worship and the Parts of the Service
which May be used to Express each step
of the Worship Experience**

<i>Vision</i>	{ Calls to Worship. Hymns—Adoration, Celebration of some Attribute of God. Prayers of Adoration, Responses. Doxology.
<i>Humility</i>	{ Prayer of Confession. Prayer Hymns. Scripture Verses and Responses Expressing Penitence.
<i>Pardon</i>	{ Reading of Scripture Assurances of Pardon. Pronouncement of Absolution by the Minister.
<i>Praise</i>	{ Psalms. Hymns of Praise and Adoration. The Creed. The Gloria. Prayers of Thanksgiving and Intercession.
<i>Commission</i>	{ Prayer—Silent or Expressed. Scripture Lessons. The Sermon. Story or Picture Interpretation.
<i>Dedication</i>	{ Offering. Silent Meditation. Consecration Hymns. Prayer.
<i>Peace</i>	{ Benediction. Scripture Responses. Musical Responses.

Suggestions for Further Study of Chapter IV

1. Make a careful study and analysis of the worship orders now in use in your Church, in the light of the principles stated in this chapter.

2. Make a collection of orders of service used in the various Churches which you may attend, and study them in the light of these principles.

3. Choosing an appropriate order of service from Part Two for your own Church, and using it as a basis, plan a complete service of worship on each of the following themes:

God's Handiwork in Nature.

Stewardship.

First Day of a Week of Witness.

Christ's Love for Children.

Celebration of a Church Anniversary.

Intercessory Prayer.

Forgiveness of Sins.

Being Good Neighbours.

Christ the Light of the World.

Victorious Living.

CHAPTER V

THE CHURCH YEAR

THE Christian Church from the dawn of its history and in many lands has centered its worship and teaching around the great Christian festivals. The first and most honoured of these festivals was Easter. Almost equal in the importance ascribed to it was Pentecost, the birthday of the Church. In the early days, all Christians wore pure white garments on Pentecost, so it came to be known as Whitsunday, a name still widely used for it. Later, other Christian festivals were one by one added to the calendar of the Church. From very early times Christmas has been celebrated. At first there was no agreement about the date, but gradually December 25 was commonly accepted. Epiphany, which is sometimes celebrated as the anniversary of the coming of the wise men, and at other times and places as the anniversary of the appearance of the Star of Bethlehem to the Magi, soon became a prominent feast.

Christian saints and martyrs, and various other persons and incidents provided occasions for other festivals. Gradually there grew up an elaborate calendar of feasts, some of which have little significance for the Christian villager of India. There is, however in the calendar of the Church, a number of important occasions which have deep religious or historical significance around which the worship and teaching of the majority of Christian Churches is properly centered. This nucleus of great Christian memorial days or festivals is of inestimably great importance in the program of the Church. As a means of focussing the attention of the Christians, and giving to them a sense of continuity with the rich historical past of the Church and making real to them the historicity of the Christ, they are almost indispensable.

In every great religion, we find a similar tendency. The Hebrews, who were predominantly a rural people, and whose religion was the very center of their life, had a few great

festivals whose influence in focussing their thought on the great events of their religious and racial history, as well as in promoting national and religious unity was incalculable. Three times a year all other work was laid aside and they rejoiced and worshipped together as one great family of God.

Another important reason may be mentioned for emphasizing the Christians festivals. Indian villagers, as well as people of the soil in every land, dearly love festivals. Our village Christian brethren live lives of constant and grinding toil. There is little opportunity for any wholesome recreation or opportunity to be joyous with their friends and brethren. They deeply need such occasions. This deep need in their lives is the secret of the continued popularity of the old heathen festivals in the villages. It is perfectly natural and right to have festivals. The question that remains is whether we shall permit the village Christians to go on participating in old heathen customs, or whether we shall provide instead a Church year of joyous and pure Christian festivals in which all can joyously take part.

Still another reason for the adoption of a Church year plan is the splendid opportunity it provides for motivating and organizing the teaching program of the Church. Around the Christian festivals can be centered appropriate seasonal Christian teaching. Each period between festivals can be filled with teaching organized around the great truth or Christian idea which is the central meaning of the coming festival. For the weeks preceding Christmas, the natural thing will be teaching about the need of a saviour, which will culminate in the joyous festival of His coming. The age-old custom of celebrating the forty days before Easter called Lent, in which there is much heart-searching, and emphasis on the deepening of the spiritual life, is a superb example of what can be done for our teaching program for the entire year.

It would seem that one of the most important things we can do in thinking through the problem of worship and teaching in the village Church is for each communion to adopt a Church year plan that will suit its peculiar traditions and

needs, and then use it as the basis for organizing the ministry of teaching and worship for the whole year. And the festivals themselves may be the great occasions for special meetings, joyous celebration, and bringing to a climax the program of teaching on the various subjects we have followed. Some Churches might find it desirable to make these festivals the communion seasons instead of having them quarterly or by some other arbitrary rule.

At a conference of rural Church leaders of the Methodist Episcopal Church at Bareilly in 1934, the following statement was prepared and urged as a means of strengthening the village Churches. It is a section of the entire report, which appeared in the *Indian Witness*, for August 23, 1934. *

The Better Observance of Christian Festivals

"The wide participation of our village people in non-Christian festivals is a weakness which demands continued attention. Such participation does not necessarily indicate any real religious conviction, but rather that the social and festive elements make a deep appeal, which is still further strengthened by custom. An additional reason for such festivals continuing their hold is that they are often occasions when the meager income of our people is considerably augmented in various ways.

"In our efforts to substitute Christian festivals the following recommendations are made:

"(a) The general approach should be positive, the firm establishment of Christian festivals, rather than a negative condemnation of non-Christian festivals without anything else being provided to take their place. It is worthy of special note that the areas in which participation has been entirely eliminated are invariably those where large dignity and reverence have been secured in regular services of worship, and where Christian festivals have become securely established.

"(b) In developing Christian festivals not only must continued teaching regarding them be given, but specific help, suggestion and direction be given as to what may and ought to be done on such occasions. Plans should be clearly worked out and the group organized by the local leader to carry them out. The

special services of worship on the great festivals should be made as impressive as possible, and by the organization of processions and *melas*, and the presentation of *kathas* and dramas, the influence of the festival season may be extended.

"(c) Continued efforts should be made to secure the observance of Sundays as a Christian "teohar" (Holiday). The non-Christian festivals are many and are well spread out over the whole year, whereas the great Christian festivals are few and confined to one or two months. The possibility of increasing the number of festivals to be specially observed should be considered. The establishment of a harvest festival is both possible and desirable."

WHICH FESTIVALS SHALL WE OBSERVE?

Three types of festivals come to the mind when we consider the needs of the Indian village Churches.

1. *The Historic Christian Festivals.* Not nearly all of those observed by the Churches of the West have significance for the village Christian. There is no value in having a festival merely for the sake of the festival. It must have a vital connection with his life and experience, and must celebrate something that is vital to his Christian experience; it must be something that has some real relation to the Church in India. There are a few of the Christian festivals which are of great significance to Indian villagers, and of universal appeal.

The first that comes to mind is *Christmas*. Of all the Christian festivals this has come nearest to being naturalized into the life and thought of the Indian Church. *Epiphany*, which by some Churches is held to be the anniversary of the appearance of the Star of Bethlehem to the Magi, and by others to be the anniversary of their visit to the infant Jesus, might have a great appeal to village people. It is celebrated on January 6, twelve days after Christmas. It may symbolize the coming of the Light of the World to the Gentiles. *Passion Week* and *Easter* are now very rapidly coming into their own as important Christian festivals. In far too many villages, Easter is as yet relatively unknown. It should surpass Christmas in the thinking of the Church.

Good Friday especially, of the days of Passion Week, should be celebrated with great solemnity. The forty days of Lent as a time of special self-denial and spiritual revival may become a time of great spiritual benefit to the Churches. It would be well to have a full eight days' special program, culminating in a great joyous celebration of Easter in all village Churches. A program for such observance will be found in Part Two.

After Easter come two more of the historic festivals of Christendom, *Ascension Day* and *Pentecost*. The birthday of the Church especially may be a time of great rejoicing in the Church, and the fifty days preceding it are an ideal time for teaching about the Church and gift of the Holy Spirit to the Church to empower her for witnessing.

2. *Christian Rural Life Festivals*. These form a group that are at the same time thoroughly Christian and yet are rooted deeply in the soil of farming countries the world over. In all the religions which have won the allegiance of tillers of the soil, there are festivals which are especially designed to celebrate the eternal mysteries of seed-time and harvest. They meet a deep human need. Too much stress can not be placed on the importance of religion in the life of the farmer. His is a very close partnership with God. In many primitive religions, each act that the farmer performs in his daily toil has some religious significance. It is highly important that if Christianity is to win the allegiance of farming peoples, it must in no way secularize his occupation. It is holy work he does; and the festivals of planting and harvest which we suggest in the observance of the church year are of the utmost importance in dramatizing the religious aspects of the farmer's life.

The *planting festival*, perhaps combined with a service of thanksgiving for the first rains of the rainy season and a service of blessing on tools, farm animals and seeds, is becoming very popular not only in India, but in Africa and China. Again, following not only the Hebrew example, but the custom of primitive people in many parts of India and

other lands, we are suggesting a *First-Fruits Day*. A short service, not a festival day, will be found for the dedication of a threshing-floor. And finally the day almost universally observed by Christian farmers, the *Harvest Thanksgiving Day*. In villages where homes are built of rather perishable materials, every year will see a number of new houses built. A service of dedication for these new homes is prepared also. It might be well to have one day especially designated in each village church when all new homes would be dedicated, or let them be dedicated in turn. The ancient ceremony of *vastu* (Hindu house dedication), finds its fruition in this Christian ceremony of home dedication.

3. *Reclaimed Hindu Festivals*. The problem of the observance of the non-Christian festivals will remain in our village churches for years to come. Are there any of them which are sufficiently unobjectionable in character that they may be reclaimed for Christ and His church? This is a controversial question. In general the tendency has been to disown and condemn all the non-Christian festivals, and to prevent Christians from having any connection whatever with their observance. But is it not possible that there may be elements of good in some of them which should not be discarded? There is certainly ample precedent in the history of the Christian church for considering this question seriously. Christmas was at first a heathen festival, but it was taken over by the Church, given totally new meaning, and figuratively speaking it was baptized! There may be similarly some pagan background in some other of the great Christian festivals.

We must recognize at the outset that there are some festivals observed in the villages which are so obscene and mischievous in character that it is impossible to see any possibility of redeeming them. We may be grateful that Easter comes near the time of the notorious *Holi* festival, and if we celebrate Easter with the joy and impressiveness it deserves, there will be little trouble with our people wanting to celebrate *Holi*. Earnest Hindu reformers, too, are trying to stamp out the

practices which have made Holi a shame and a curse to the villages where it is observed.

But the Festival of Lights at the Indian New Year, called *DIVALI*, is a festival of totally different character. Much can be said in favour of Christian village churches celebrating Divali in a Christian way. The making of beautiful designs in the courtyard and before the door, the general cleanup of the premises, the illumination, processions, and rejoicing are good in themselves.

Divali is increasingly being observed as a festival when Christians celebrate the coming of Christ, the Light of the World. In some areas, it is celebrated as the Harvest Thanksgiving festival. Or the Harvest Thanksgiving Festival is observed as a part of the general celebration at this time, as outlined in the program on page 104. In the Sangli area of Maharashtra much constructive work has been done along the line of developing Christian festivals. There the Divali season was utilized to stress the dissemination of the Bible as the Light-bringer. An account of this observance, written by Dr. John L. Goheen, is appended, for it is a graphic account of what actually is being done. Divali is being baptized for Christ.

One other day may be observed which has its counterpart both in Christian tradition and among the primitive peoples of India—a day in memory of those who have departed. This is being observed with new and rich meaning among many village churches, and is worthy of a place in the Christian Rural Church Calendar, as a day of remembrance and thanksgiving for the lives of friends and loved ones who have gone on before into the presence of the Lord.

... ..

There are other special days which may and should be observed more widely in the village churches which are now quite generally observed in larger churches. The special days of prayer for the National Christian Council, the National Missionary Society, Sunday-School Day, Children's Day, Bible Society Day, and other days which may be of peculiar

significance to one communion or one locality, may be fitted into the Church calendar for the year.

THE BIBLE FESTIVAL OF LIGHT

"The Village Christians of India have but few festive occasions in their lives. The Christmas and New Year festivals are of course universally observed with great joy and satisfaction and the Easter season is coming to have a deeper and more widespread significance. But there is need of much more enlivenment, both socially and spiritually, because it is a very drab and monotonous existence that most of these rural Christian folk are faced with.

"In order, therefore, to bring added richness into the calendar an effort is being made to introduce some new festivals for village Christians, in the general area of Sangli, in the Southern Maratha country. The first of these to be started is the Bible festival, synchronizing with the Hindu *Dipwali* or festival of Lights. Why not introduce Christian significance into it for village Christians? And what richer significance than that of holding up the Bible as a medium of light for Life's pathway? 'Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet', and a light upon my path".

"In October, 1937, the first attempt to bring this meaning into *Dipwali* was made. The results surpassed all expectations. A programme lasting ten days was prepared. Each day there was special Bible Study and time for meditation, both for individuals and groups. Family prayers were stressed. The day was begun with bathing and with prayer: 'Cleanliness is next to Godliness,' and it is important that village Christians should live and learn that principle. Then the sale and distribution of Bibles and Bible portions was carried on and the aim to have a Bible or New Testament in every Christian home was emphasized. While there has not been complete success in achieving that aim, no little progress has been made. Each evening the members of the community would gather together in the central places for prayer and worship, and further study. Many old quarrels and misunderstandings were removed, and a spirit of goodwill and mutual confidence was engendered. The Holy

Spirit was working in the hearts of His people.

"Sunday, October 31st, was selected as the special Bible Sunday. The houses of worship were attractively decorated, and every one turned out happy and clean, and full of praise and gratitude. In the morning service the address had to do with the continued and constant use of the Bible, while the influence of the Bible as a Light in the Life of the village and nation was the theme for the evening service. Preceding the latter there was a procession of young and old through the Christian quarter to the Church, each one holding an unlit candle. Of course, this was accompanied with music and singing. As darkness came on, the little *Dipwali* lights placed in front of many of the Christians homes, and about the House of Worship, were lit, and the closing feature of the service was the Candle Lighting, with the promise from each one to keep on carrying the light.

"Now after a good many weeks, one is told that this festival proved to be one of great spiritual help and health wherever it was celebrated. And in not less than ten centres in the Sangli area was this done much as has been described above. The sale of Scripture portions and Bibles increased perceptibly, too. It is quite certain that hereafter many more villages will join in this celebration because it is felt that this Bible Festival of Light has been blessed of God. Truly the Light of His countenance seemed to be shining in these rural centres!"

—REPORTED BY DR. JOHN L. GOHEEN

A SUGGESTED OUTLINE FOR A CHURCH YEAR FOR VILLAGE CHURCHES

Christmas. Three or four days' celebration.

To be followed by teaching on the Life of Christ, leading on to and culminating in Easter.

Epiphany. One day's special program. Emphasis on Evangelistic Witnessing.

Lent. Forty days' of special meetings for prayer and devotion, with special efforts to deepen the spiritual life of the village Christians. This period should be used also for special training for new inquirers.

Palm Sunday. Baptism may be administered on this day.

Thursday of Passion Week. The Lord's Supper may be observed.

Good Friday. Special service of penitence and prayer, with fasting.

Easter Sunday. A full day's program of joyous celebration. Many churches will celebrate the Lord's supper. After Easter the teaching of the church will be on Evangelism and the Church, leading up to Pentecost.

Ascension Day.

Pentecost. A special day of prayer for the gift of the Holy Spirit and for witnessing to relatives and caste-fellows. To be followed by a few weeks of Christian teaching on Home and Family Life, leading up to the dedication of homes.

Planting Festival

Dedication of New Homes. To be followed by teaching on various aspects of Christian Living.

First Fruits Day.

Divali. To be followed by special teaching on Stewardship, leading up to the Harvest Thanksgiving festival.

Harvest Festival. To be followed by teaching about God and His plan for the world, leading up to Advent and Christmas.

NOTE ON THE FREQUENT OBSERVANCE OF THE COMMUNION

The importance of frequent observance of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper can scarcely be overemphasized. It is the supreme occasion of worship. It may well be observed in connection with the celebration of most of the festivals in this outlined church year. It should be observed at least as often as once a month in every church where it is at all possible. It has been found that the regular and reverent observance of this service is one of the most potent forces for Christian growth, even more in the villages than in urban centers.

Suggestions for Further Study of Chapter V

1. What Christian festivals are observed in the churches of your area? How are they observed?
2. List all the festivals observed by the non-Christians in your area. What is the origin of each? How is it celebrated? What social benefits or what harm result from its observance? What proportion of the people take part in it? To what extent do Christians participate in it?
3. Which of the festivals listed above are such that they might be adapted for Christian observance?
4. Plan a year's church program of Christian festivals, with the teaching appropriate to the intervening periods, for the churches in your area.
5. Make detailed plans for the observance of Lent in your churches.

CHAPTER VI

CREATING THE ATMOSPHERE OF WORSHIP

ALL our planning for the service of worship will come to full fruition only if the minds and hearts of our people are made ready and expectant for the experience of worship. It can be a great, transforming experience which opens the fountains from which the living waters from the throne of God will flow, or it may be just another occasion on which the people watch with dull interest a transaction between the preacher and God. Blessed is that leader of worship who transforms the humble village church, even though it be built of mud and thatched with palm leaves, into a temple where every hungry soul is fed, and every longing heart is brought into the very presence of the King of Kings. By using the aids at our command we can create an atmosphere in which souls instinctively look God-ward and are satisfied.

It is true that a true worshipper will be able to worship anywhere and in almost any circumstance. Yet in our congregations there will always be many who do not know well the paths to the highlands of the spirit. There is always a large group who need the atmosphere of worship, and a definite place which has holy associations and in which the attention is irresistibly drawn upward. We shall consider in this chapter some of the essentials in creating the atmosphere of worship, and suggestions for the development of a spirit of reverence.

THE PLACE OF WORSHIP

Too much emphasis cannot be placed on the importance of having a place especially set apart in every village where there is a Christian group, for the worship of God. However humble and plain it may be, it is of incalculable value in providing a center for the religious life and aspirations of the village Christians, giving them a sense of the worth of their faith, and making possible for every Christian group to have its little place of worship or chapel. It is neither necessary nor

is it desirable that every group should have a church built of costly and permanent materials, subsidized from western funds. A small chapel with mud walls and a thatched roof, built and owned by the village Christian group itself it of greater value for our purpose than a large and westernized building provided by mission subsidy.

In villages where there is a larger congregation, it is desirable that there be a larger church, and in every place as soon as the economic condition of the Christian group permits, a building consistent in permanence, beauty, and dignity with our faith, should be built. At many places in India one can see examples of the growth of the church in this respect. Where fifty or a hundred years ago worshippers gathered in a mud hut to worship, but were encouraged to go on, within a few years they built more permanently and now many congregations are housed in beautiful and permanent buildings of stone or brick, built by their own efforts and with their own resources.

The question of a building site is a difficult one in many places. In some provinces land is no longer granted for purely religious purposes. It may be more desirable in such areas for land to be purchased outright by the Christian group and held by a board of trustees, so there can be no question of tenure. In every case this matter should be thoroughly gone into. The place should be adequate for the church and a small compound and garden, quiet, and near enough to the center of the Christian group.

There are thousands of villages in India where it is not possible now to build even a small building for a chapel. In the dryer areas, an enclosed courtyard may be adequate. It should have a special platform or place where the leader may stand or sit to conduct worship, and should be well shaded. One beautiful and inexpensive place of worship was prepared by enclosing a small courtyard under the shade of a great tree, within a flowering hedge. At one end of the courtyard, a small open shrine was built, about six feet square and six feet high, with a graceful domed roof. Within this little shrine was

a cross, and a small table and prayer desk. The leader of worship stood here to conduct worship, and the people all sat in the court around it. A Bible and a few religious pictures are kept in the shrine, and any worshipper may go there at any hour of the day and sit or kneel in the shrine, read the Bible and meditate and pray. This may be a possible type of worship place for many villages.

In North India, a worship platform is occasionally prepared near the house of a leading Christian. On occasions of worship, a special rug is spread, a cross or a picture of Christ is placed at the center where the leader sits, the Bible is placed on a little low table upon a clean white cloth, lines are marked out in chalk to indicate the rows where worshippers are to sit. This is probably the very simplest arrangement that can be made.

It should be possible in most villages where there is a small congregation, to build a church, using the common indigenous materials which are used for building the better quality of homes in that locality, and roofed with tile. Around it should be a little garden filled with flowers in season. It should be distinctive enough in style to that all who pass by may know it is a place of worship. It should be open at all hours of the day for those who desire to go for an hour of meditation and prayer. But it should be so arranged that goats do not make it a harbour!

The village church should be a building which expresses the worship feelings of the congregation, yet one in which they feel at home. The value of benches and other western furniture is extremely doubtful, and in most cases a definite hindrance and a useless luxury. If the floor is of stone it may be covered by strips of home-woven rugs or carpets or matting. In many places instead of a high table and pulpit, the leader will desire also to sit on a small platform, and the communion table also may be only a few inches high.

The question of architecture is one that is exercising the minds of many people. How far can we go in adapting Indian architecture to serve the purposes of the church? What is definitely Indian architecture? It is to be feared that many

village churches which have been built have little design about them. But it is possible to build even the humblest building in a style which will suggest worship, and the sight of which will lift the heart toward God. In every cultural area of India, some good Christian architect should make a careful study of the architecture of the worship places of other religions, and should create a style of building for the Christian church which will satisfy the esthetic and utilitarian demands of the church.

Everyone who sets about building a church in India should study with care Dr. D. J. Fleming's beautiful book, *Heritage of Beauty*. The sub-title of this book is *Pictorial Studies of Modern Christian Architecture in Asia and Africa Illustrating the Influence of Indigenous Cultures*. Both the pictures and the text in this volume will help to give the prospective builder ideas as to how Christian life and worship are finding expression in and through the heritage of beauty in each land where the church is taking root in the soil.

Not only in order to create an atmosphere of worship is it necessary to give thought to the beauty and arrangement and style of the building, but in order to make the church really indigenous, we must give the matter our closest attention, Dr. Fleming says, "As a consequence of regional conditions of climate and of historical and religious influences, each people is still expressing itself in certain peculiar and well-defined artistic ways which show themselves in taste and sentiment and thus constitute for that people a living language. Sometimes these native moods and gifts become consecrated to our Lord, thus naturalizing Christianity. When this comes about the Christian churches of Asia and Africa speak to their own as they never could through Gothic, Greek or other Western forms, ritual and architecture. The message becomes embodied not only in words but also in music, color and stone. As at Pentecost, men exclaim, "Behold now we hear, every man in our own language wherein we were born!"¹

¹ Fleming D. J. *Heritage of Beauty*. p. 11. The Friendship Press, New York, by permission.

Our sole purpose will be to provide a building which will give expression to our highest ideals of Christian worship and will at the same time obviously belong to the people among whose homes it stands, and for whom it is built. It should express Christianity perfectly, yet through indigenous forms. A Christian Church, even in the remotest and poorest Christian community, can and should be appropriate, beautiful, and suggestive of the highest and best in religion and in the indigenous culture.

A few suggestions should be made of ways in which we can through the material environment foster the spirit of reverent worship. Mention has been made in a previous chapter of the use of pictures in worship. Good pictures may well be a permanent part of the furnishings of the house of God, and may have a large influence in creating the atmosphere of worship. Such pictures as Da Vinci's *Last Supper*, Thomas' *Christ the Dawn*, and Hofmann's *Christ in Gethsemane* or Hunt's *The Light of the World*, are of such great value in drawing the soul toward Christ that they or similar ones would be of great value in every church in the land. They need not be expensive, and framing is also cheap. The objections often raised to having pictures in the church are hardly of sufficient weight to cause us to deprive our people of these effective aids to worship.

The use of the Cross as a fixture in the place of worship is also a controversial question in some quarters. But as the supreme symbol of the Christian faith surely there can be no valid objection to its use, on the communion table, on the dome or gable or spire of the church or other appropriate place. It need never become an object of worship. But its symbolic value and its efficacy in drawing the soul into the atmosphere of worshipful contemplation have been sufficiently proved to justify its use in all Protestant Churches.

Flowers have been used in worship from time immemorial in India. Just how they can best be used is a question that each church may solve. But as emblems of the beauty and creative power and love of God, they surely have a place in every

church. It is a true instinct that leads men to offer flowers in worship to God. It would be well for every church to have a small flower garden, and to have a few flowers on the altar in every service of worship.

In designing and decorating the church, much use can be made of Christian symbolism. There is a wealth of Christian symbols, some of them dating from the very earliest days of the church. It is possible to combine some of these historic symbols, such as the star, the cross, the vine, the loaf, the sheaf, the dove, the candle-stick, the Lamb, the crown, and a host of others which have historic meanings, with some of the religious symbols of India which have historic and deeply devotional meanings. One of the most beautiful country churches in India, the Presbyterian Church at Borsad in Gujarat, while not Indian in architectural design, has in its great carved wooden doors, the carved cornices, and the richly carved pulpit and communion table, beautiful examples of the use of symbols. The *pipal* leaf, the lotus, and other symbols which are rich with meaning to Indians are combined with the historic Christian symbols. Both in the windows of this church, and in the windows of Stevenson Divinity College in Ahmedabad are beautiful examples of the use of the ancient Indian art of pierced stone carving, used in the service of the house of God. These are most suggestive examples of how the glories and treasures of the nations may be brought into the service of Christian worship.

THE MINISTER'S PART IN CREATING REVERENCE

The attitude of the leader has everything to do with the attitude of his congregation in the matter of reverence. If the leader shows by his dignity, quietness, and reverence that he believes himself to be engaged in a high and holy task, and that he is in the presence of God, the people will surely follow his example. But if he acts the clown or is careless and slipshod or unprepared and unkempt, he may expect the same from his people. His voice and manner in conducting worship must be at the same time serious and reverent, yet ex-

pressing the radiant joy of the Christian faith. The whining, unnatural, stilted or pompous tone which some ministers use is most deplorable, and will lay the man open to the charge of hypocrisy. The posture, gestures, and movements of the leader should be unhurried, dignified, and graceful.

Nothing adds more to the impression of worship as being a high and reverent exercise than careful and adequate preparation on the part of the leader. If he comes and hurriedly leafs through the hymnals to select hymns, is undecided about which Scripture lesson to read, there is little likelihood of his being able to lead his people in worship. Every hymn must be selected carefully beforehand, every prayer thought through and prepared, the message well in hand, and the program so planned that it will be a real act of worship, not merely a patchwork of items hastily thrown together.

The leader can do much by teaching the children, and the adults in his congregation how to worship, and how to behave in worship. His example is of prime importance, but he might well use some teaching time occasionally to explain the meaning and practise of worship, and teach his people how to act. New hymns should not be used in worship, for bad singing detracts from the atmosphere of worship. New hymns should be taught in other periods, and when they have become familiar they may be used in worship.

It has been found by many leaders of worship that the wearing of a special robe adds much to the dignity of worship. It hides the leaders' individuality. Many churches have adopted a certain costume for their ministers. Even in the smallest and most informal service of worship in a village, the wearing of the gown adds to the spirit of worship. If the reader's church does not have a prescribed form of dress for its ministers, he might write to Ingraham Institute, M. E. Mission, Ghaziabad, U.P., or to Mission Industrial School, Saugor, C.P. Inexpensive and appropriate vestments are made at either of these places, and they will probably be glad to quote prices to inquirers.

SOME MISCELLANEOUS SUGGESTIONS

1. The floor of the place of worship may be marked off in squares, each square of sufficient size to accommodate one worshipper. Those who come first should come to the front and take the first squares, and fill them all up from the front. Late-comers will not pass in front of anyone nor distract their attention.

2. Facilities for washing feet and hands might be provided outside the door, so that all may come into the place of worship clean. Shoes and sandals should be left outside.

3. The habit of silent prayer with bowed head upon entering the house of worship should be carefully cultivated. Whispering or visiting is out of place. The time for that is after the service, outside of the church.

4. The people should be taught to come to church wearing clean clothes, bathed, and with hair properly combed.

5. Effort should be made to see that every literate worshipper have a Bible and a song-book, and every illiterate worshipper become literate.

6. No one should be allowed to enter while prayer is being offered or the Scripture is being read. It is not difficult to teach the people to wait at the door in prayer or meditation until the prayer or Scripture reading is finished.

7. Posture in prayer is important. Where there are no benches; the most natural posture for prayer may be to sit with bowed heads and folded hands. Customs here may vary in different areas or different churches, but the practise in a congregation should be uniform.

8. Where there is only a courtyard or platform for worship, it may be made more attractive by spreading a rug or matting, with a special rug for the leader.

9. The person who takes care of the place of worship has a great responsibility. To keep the place spotlessly clean, see that fresh flowers are on the altar, and keep up the garden, may

well be a project of volunteer service for a group of young people in the church. In many villages, the Christian families take the responsibility for cleaning and beautifying the Church a week at a time, turn by turn. This is a most commendable plan.

Suggestions for Further Study of Chapter VI

1. Make a study of the worship practices of the Old Testament which were designed to promote reverence; also a study of the worship practises of other faiths in India which stress this trait—such as removal of shoes upon entering a temple or mosque, etc.

2. Make a study of worship places of the non-Christian faiths in your village or town. Draw plans of them.

3. Make a study of all the churches you have seen.

- a. In what proportion of the Christian villages are there churches?
- b. How were these churches built?
- c. Who financed their building?
- d. Materials used in building.
- e. Style of architecture.
- f. Symbols or other features used in beautifying the church.

4. A project carried out by the students of the Rural Church School, Bulsar, may be suggestive of what may be done. All these students have been village teachers. As a class project, each made a careful study of his own village, then made plans for the building of a church there. These plans included arousing the interest of the village Christians, raising a building fund, choosing a plan for the church, making a careful budget, and finally drawing a set of plans for the proposed building.

5. How would you answer this objection: "We cannot have pictures in our church, for Hindu and Mohammedan friends will accuse us of idol-worship"?

6. What indigenous arts in your part of India may be brought into the service of Christ in building or beautifying the House of God? Such as:

Wood carving.

Pierced stone work, or stone carving.

Plaster designing.

Basketry.

Cloth, matting, or rug weaving.

7. List the religious symbols with which you are familiar which can be used to portray Christian truth.

Gaylamount
Pembles

PART TWO
ORDERS OF SERVICE
PROGRAMS FOR CHRISTIAN FESTIVALS



A Service of Worship in the Words of the Bible

Note:—This service has been widely used among the Hindi-speaking churches and found useful. It is simple, moving, and couched entirely in the exalted language of the Bible. It can easily be memorized in a few months by a village congregation.

* * *

Leader.—Oh, come, let us sing unto the Lord; Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving; Let us make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms. It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves; We are His people and the sheep of His pasture. Psalms 95:1,2. 100:3.

Hymn of Praise.

Leader.—Let us call to mind the commandments of God.

People.—Thou shalt have no other gods before me.

Thou shalt not bow down thyself unto nor serve any idol.

Thou shalt not take the name of God in vain.

Thou shalt remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.

Thou shalt honour thy father and thy mother.

Thou shalt not kill.

Thou shalt not commit adultery.

Thou shalt not steal.

Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour.

Thou shalt not covet. Exodus 20:1-17.

Leader.—The first and great commandment is this, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.

Jesus said, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; even as I have loved you, that ye also love one another.

Mark 12:20-31. John 13:34.

People.—O Lord, give us grace to obey these Thy holy laws, and to receive Thy promises.

Hymn of Prayer.

Leader.—Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Matt. 11:28.

Blessed are the poor in spirit:

People.—For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Leader.—Blessed are they that mourn:

People.—For they shall be comforted.

Leader.—Blessed are the meek:

People.—For they shall inherit the earth.

Leader.—Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness:

People.—For they shall be filled.

Leader.—Blessed are the merciful:

People.—For they shall obtain mercy.

Leader.—Blessed are the pure in heart:

People.—For they shall see God.

Leader.—Blessed are the peacemakers:

People.—For they shall be called sons of God.

Leader.—Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake:

People.—For theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

Matt. 5:3-10.

Leader.—Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I commanded you: and lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world.

Matt. 28:19-20.

Men and brethren, what shall we do?

People.—Repent ye, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins;

Leader.—And ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call.

Acts 2:38-39.

People.—All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the prophets.

Matt. 7:12.

Leader.—Render to no man evil for evil. Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good. Sing with grace in your hearts unto God with songs and hymns and spiritual songs. And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Rom. 12:17,21. Col. 3:16-17.

All.—This is my faith:

God is Love.

God is a spirit, and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth.

For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Jesus Christ is my Lord and Saviour, and neither is there any other name under heaven, that is given among men, wherein we must be saved.

Leader.—Oh, come, let us worship and bow down;

Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker:

Psalms 95:6.

People.—Our Father who art in heaven—Hallowed be Thy name—Thy Kingdom come—Thy will be done, as in heaven so on earth—Give us this day our daily bread—and forgive us our debts—as we also have forgiven our debtors—And bring us not into temptation—But deliver us from evil—For Thine is the kingdom—and the power and the glory—Forever and ever—Amen.

Hymn.

Benediction.—(Pronounced by the Leader.)

A Service of Worship for Sunday Morning

Note.—This order of worship has been used widely in the Deccan, among the Methodist churches. The hymns are always accompanied by an orchestra of Indian instruments. Fifteen minutes before the hour for beginning the service, the choir sings *bhajans*. While they are singing, all come in reverently, bow their heads in silent prayer, then join in the singing of the *bhajans*.

* * *

Hymn of Prayer.—The whole congregation sing with bowed heads.

Leader.—(Kneeling, reads) To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgiveness; though we have rebelled against Him; neither have we obeyed the voice of the Lord our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants and prophets. Daniel 9:9-10.

People.—I will arise and go to my father, and will say unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight: I am no more worthy to be called thy son:

Luke 15:18-19.

A Unison Prayer of confession, followed by a brief Prayer by the Leader.

The Lord's Prayer.—(Chanted).

Responsive Reading.—There are three readings: 1. The Beatitudes, 2. The 23rd Psalm, 3. The Ten Commandments. The first two are either sung or repeated responsively as directed by the pastor. After the pastor reads each commandment, the congregation repeat "Lord have mercy upon us and incline our hearts to keep this law." During these responsive readings the congregation remain seated in meditative posture.

The Apostles' Creed.

Scripture Reading.—(By the Leader or an educated young man).

People.—(Chanting) Glory be to God on high, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men.

Offering.—(The choir sings, the stewards receive the offering,
then prayer).

Hymn.

Sermon.

Closing Hymn or Doxology.

Benediction.

A Service of Worship

Note:—This service was first published in Amacha Patra, September, 1937, in Marathi. It is now being very widely used in Maharashtra. It has more recently been published in booklet form with suggested Scripture readings, Psalms, and suggested themes for services, by the American Presbyterian Mission, Nipani, Belgaum District.

When the people are assembled at the place of worship,
all will reverently bow in prayer.

Leader.—Come, let us stand and praise God.

Doxology.—All stand, reverently fold their hands and sing.

People.—Oh come, let us worship and bow down;

Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Psalms 95:6.

Know ye that the Lord He is God:

It is He that hath made us, and not we ourselves;

We are His people and the sheep of His pasture.

Psalms 100:3.

Having then a great high priest, who hath passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession. For we have not a high priest that cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but one that hath been at all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. Let us draw near therefore with boldness unto the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy, and may find grace to help us in time of need.

Heb. 4:14-16.

Leader.—Let us pray. Prayer of Adoration.

Prayer of Invocation.

Leader and People.—Prayer of confession of sin. (Unison).

For these prayers all will reverently kneel, and after each prayer will reverently say, Amen.

Leader.—Will here pronounce the promise of forgiveness of sins, or will read John 3:16, Matt. 11:28, and John 6:37.

Leader.—Now let us praise the Lord. (All will stand).

People.—Let us praise His glorious name.

Leader.—Praise the Lord, for He is good.

People.—For His mercy endureth forever.

Leader.—Here will read a psalm of praise, or have it read responsively.

Leader.—Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost.

People.—As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be; World without end. Amen.

Hymn.

Scripture Lesson from the Old Testament.

Hymn.

Scripture Lesson from the New Testament.

Hymn of Praise.—(All will stand).

Leader and People.—The Apostles' Creed. (All standing will say in unison).

Litany.—The leader will offer brief prayers of adoration, thanksgiving, petition and intercession. After each petition, the people will respond, as follows:

After the thanksgivings, "We give Thee thanks, O God."

After the petitions and intercessions, "We beseech Thee to hear us, Good Lord."

Leader and People.—The Lord's Prayer.

Offering.

Blessing on the Offering.

Hymn.

Sermon.

Hymn.

Benediction.—The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit, be with you and abide with you, now and forever.

People.—Amen.

A Simple Liturgy for Village Churches

Leader.—O come, Let us sing unto the Lord;

Let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation.

Let us come before His presence with thanksgiving;

Let us make a joyful noise unto Him with psalms.

Ps. 95:1-2.

O Lord, open Thou our lips:

Congregation.—And our mouths shall shew forth Thy praise.

Ps. 51:15.

Leader.—Praise ye the Lord.

Congregation.—The Lord's name be praised.

Leader.—Let us pray. (Here follows a prayer of invocation and confession.) Then a *Hymn* or *Bhajan* may be sung.

Leader.—The first and great commandment is this: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength. And a second like unto it is this: Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Matthew 22:37-39.

Congregation.—Jesus said, A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another; by this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one for another.

John 13:34-35.

O Lord, give us grace to keep this Thy holy law.

Leader.—Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Matthew 11:28.

Let us recite the Beatitudes of our Lord Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:3-12 should here be recited, the leader reciting the first part of each verse and the congregation the second part. Or they may be sung.)

Leader.—Go ye therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:

Congregation.—And Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Matthew 28:19-20.

Leader.—Repent ye and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ unto the remission of your sins; and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Congregation.—For to you is the promise, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call unto Him.

Acts 2:38-39.

Here follows a *Hymn* or *Bhajan*.

Leader.—All things therefore whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, even so do ye also unto them: for this is the law and the Prophets.

Matthew 7:12.

And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to the which also ye were called in one body; and be ye thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; in all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts unto God. And whatsoever ye do, in word or in deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him. Amen.

Colossians 3:15-17.

At this time all may recite together the following creed in words of Scripture: "I believe that:

God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth. God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth. God is love; and every one that loveth is born of God, and knoweth God. God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on Him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life. God hath made Him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus who was crucified. And in none other is there salvation: for there is none other name given under Heaven, among men,

wherein we must be saved. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins. The world passeth away, and the lust thereof; but he that doeth the will of God abideth forever. Amen.

Leader.—O come, let us worship and bow down;

Let us kneel before the Lord our Maker. Let us pray.

(Here will follow a prayer of thanksgiving, petition and intercession).

Congregation.—The congregation will pray in unison the Lord's Prayer.

Then *a passage of Scripture* may be read by the leader or someone else who is able to read well. Then *a short sermon*.

Then a *hymn* or *bhajan* will be sung.

Leader.—The Lord bless you and keep you;

The Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

A Service of Worship for Sunday Morning

As the worshippers enter the place of worship, they should take their places reverently, while a group of singers with instruments sing *Bhajans*. Each should bow in silent prayer.

Leader.—Let us worship God: One of the following sentences, or more if desired, may be spoken reverently: Psalm 67:1-3; 92:1-2; 105:1-2; 106:1; 113:1-3; Habakkuk 2:20; John 4:24.

Leader.—Lift up your hearts!

Congregation.—We lift them up unto the Lord.

Leader.—O Lord, open thou our eyes:

Congregation.—That we may behold wondrous things out of Thy law.

Leader.—O Lord, open Thou our lips:

Congregation.—And our mouth shall show forth Thy praise.

Leader.—Praise ye the Lord:

Congregation.—The Lord's Name be praised!

Leader.—Let us pray: Here follows a prayer of invocation and confession.

Hymn of Praise.

Reading from the Bible.—Unison or Responsive.

The Creed.—Either the Apostles' Creed or the Scriptural Creed may be used.

Prayer.—A prayer of Thanksgiving and Intercession.

The Lord's Prayer may then be said or sung by the people.

The Beatitudes.—Repeated responsively, the leader reciting the first part, and the congregation the second part of each verse.

Hymn of Prayer for Guidance and Light.

Offering and Prayer of Dedication.

Sermon.

A Period of Meditation and Prayer.

The Doxology.

Benediction.

A Service of Sacred Silence

Note.—While silent prayer and meditation may become one of the finest forms of corporate worship, it requires guidance and training. At first, the period of silent prayer should be not more than five minutes. After some experience and training, a congregation can well spend at least twenty minutes in worshipful meditation and quiet prayer.

Leader.—My soul, wait thou in silence for God only;
For my expectation is from Him.

Congregation.—He only is my rock and my salvation:
He is my high tower; I shall not be moved.

Ps. 62:5-6.

Leader.—The Lord is in His Holy Temple: let all the earth keep silence before Him. Let us pray. (Kneeling, the congregation will pray as directed by the leader.)

Hymn or Bhajan.—This should be a hymn of adoration, sung with reverence.

Scripture Lesson.—The lesson should be read silently by all worshippers.

Then may follow a short, worshipful talk by the leader, only sufficient to guide the thoughts of the worshippers as they meditate and pray.

Sacred Silence.—In the beginning, the leader may speak quietly these or similar sentences:

"He that dwelleth in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

"Praise ye the Lord. O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good; For His loving-kindness endureth forever."

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."

"Be still, and know that I am God."

"Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth."

Benediction.—Grace to you and peace, from God the Father and from the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

A Service of Worship in Song

Note.—The hymns suggested in this service are found in the Gujarati Hymnal, *Bhajanasangraha*. In other languages, suitable hymns and *bhajans* may be selected. While the congregation is gathering in the place of worship, a choir may sing *bhajans*, accompanied by native instruments.

Leader.—Praise ye the Lord; sing unto the Lord a new song;
And His praise in the assembly of the saints.

Congregation.—Blessed be His glorious name forever;
And let the whole earth be filled with His glory.

Hymn of Praise.—Number 21—Bhajan Karo Nit Bhore Bhāi.

Prayer of Confession.—Hymn No. 262—Hun to Pāpi Din Bi-
chāro.

Praise.—Chanting of Psalm 136, verses 1 to 9, and 23 to 26.
The leader chants the first part of each verse, and the congregation responds with the second part, "For His mercy endureth forever." Other sentences, taken from the New Testament, in praise of Christ, may be used in the same way, or with these verses from the Psalm.

Scripture Reading in Song.—Ephesians 6:10-17, which has been set to a Gujarati lyric tune, may be used. Ātmik Sangār Sajo Virlā Re.

Hymns of Prayer.—328—He Prabhu Darshan Āpi Āj.
300—Esu Sāmarth Tāru.
301—The Lord's Prayer in Lyric form.

Instruction.—239—Tārananā Bhojanama Soune Notaro. (The Great Commission) A short sermon or address by the leader may follow here.

Dedication.—337—Tan, Man, Dhan, Prabhu. (In Marathi also).

Benediction.—The Doxology may be sung.

Leader.—The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with thy spirit.
Amen.

A Brief Order for Daily Morning Prayers

Leader.—Seek ye the Lord while He may be found: call ye upon Him while He is near.

Congregation.—O come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our Maker.

Leader.—Let us pray: Here will follow a brief prayer of thanksgiving for the new day, and confession of sin.

Hymn of Praise.

Reading from the Scripture.—Responsive, or by one of the educated Christians.

Meditation.—Either a brief period of silent meditation, or a short but carefully prepared devotional talk by the leader.

Prayer.—This may be a bidding prayer, or sentence prayers by various people.

To be followed by the Lord's prayer, said or sung.

Benediction.—All may repeat together:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with us all. Amen.

A Brief Order for Daily Evening Prayers

Leader.—The Lord's Name be praised. From the rising of the sun to the going down of the same, the Lord's Name is to be praised.

Congregation.—Let our prayers be set forth as incense before Him, the lifting up of our hands as the evening sacrifice.

Leader.—Let us bless the Lord:

Congregation.—Thanks be to God!

Leader.—Let us pray: A prayer of Thanksgiving.

Hymn of Praise.

Psalm 23, recited in unison.

A short lesson from the New Testament.

Meditation.

Prayer of Consecration and Intercession.

Hymn of Dedication and Trust.

Benediction.—May the Almighty and merciful God, the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, bless us and preserve us, this night and forevermore. Amen.

A Worship Program for Christmas

The festival of the birthday of Christ should be one of great joy in the village churches. For a month in advance the teaching program may be centered around the theme of the Advent. New hymns and *bhajans* should be learned, and a drama or pageant carefully rehearsed. The joy of giving to Christ and dedicating ourselves to Him should be stressed. The festival should be one of good fellowship and varied expressions of Christian joy. Four days' program is suggested here.

December 22. On this day, the house of worship and the grounds around it should be swept, cleaned, and whitewashed, if necessary. With this should go also a thorough clean-up of every Christian home, in readiness for the days of joy and celebration. In the evening, a service of song and praise should be held.

December 23. On this day, all the Christian homes and the church should be decorated with the cheap paper flags used everywhere in India, and with garlands of flowers and green leaves. The evening may be given over again to singing. If some one who can give a whole evening's performance of a *kirtan* or *Kalakshepam* is available, it would be most helpful.

December 24. Morning. A Village fair. Exhibitions of flowers, vegetables, fruits, poultry, hand-work, children's work from the school, and other products, may be arranged by the church. A baby show, in which all the little folk of the community participate is very appropriate.

Afternoon. A program of games and sports for everyone in the village Christian community.

Evening. A Christmas drama or pageant, with singing of Christmas carols. Prizes may be awarded at this time for the exhibition and the baby show.

A Program of Worship for Christmas Morning

At dawn, the older children and young people should form a procession and sing Christmas carols all through the village.

The Service of Worship

Groups from various parts of the village may march, singing Christmas hymns, to the church. If there is a singing band, it should be present fifteen minutes before the beginning of the service, playing and singing.

A Service of Worship for Christmas Day

Leader.—Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which shall be to all the people: for there is born to you this day in the city of David a Saviour who is Christ the Lord.

Luke 2:10-11.

Hymn of Praise.

Prayer of Adoration.

Leader.—O Lord, open Thou our lips:

People.—And our mouth shall speak forth thy praise.

Leader.—Praise ye the Lord;

People.—The Lord's name be praised.

Leader.—Let us worship in song: (Christmas songs may be sung by the children).

Reading of Lesson from the Bible.

Prayer of Petition and Intercession.

Scripture Response: Leader.—Let us with wise men, lowly shepherds, and all the heavenly host, worship the Holy Babe, and spread our gifts of love, adoration and service at His cradle. And the angel said unto Mary, Behold, thou shalt conceive and bring forth a son, and thou shalt call His name Jesus.

People.—O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Leader.—The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Most High shall overshadow thee, and the holy thing that is to be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.

People.—O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Leader.—And Mary brought forth her first-born son, and she wrapped Him in swaddling clothes, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

People.—O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Leader.—And there were shepherds in the same country abiding in the field, and keeping watch by night over their flocks. And an angel of the Lord stood by them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them.

People.—O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Leader.—And a multitude of the heavenly host were praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill towards men.

People.—O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

The Christmas Message.—A short talk by the leader.

Dedication Service for small children.—(See the suggested order for this service of dedication on page 120.)

Hymn.

Service of Dedication of gifts: Leader.—And wise men came from the East, and when they saw the young child with Mary His mother, they fell down and worshipped Him, and opening their treasures, they offered unto Him gifts, gold and frankincense and myrrh.

People.—O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him; O come, let us adore Him, Christ the Lord.

Leader.—Let us with the wise men and shepherds, bring our gifts to the feet of Jesus. (The people will now bring forward their gifts—money, fruits, grain, vegetables, eggs, products of their hand-work, etc., and lay them at the altar.)

Leader's Prayer of Consecration of gifts:—O Christ of Bethlehem, our hearts are glad that Thou has come to the world. Wilt Thou this day be born anew in our hearts. Like the shepherds and wise men of old, we worship and adore Thee with our hearts and lips, and with our treasures too. We dedicate these our humble gifts, with all we have and are, to Thee. Use us and these our gifts to bring peace on earth, goodwill towards men. Amen.

Hymn.

Benediction.

Note:—On Christmas evening, a common feast for all the Christians of the village will greatly cement the fellowship and

deepen the joy of the Christmas festival. It may be followed by a final service of joyous song and praise.

If such pictures as Burne-Jones' picture of the Adoration of the Wise Men are available, the interpretation may be a moving and beautiful part of the Christmas morning service.

Passion Week, and Easter

The eight days beginning with Palm Sunday and culminating in Easter ought to be for Indian Christian villagers the most important and joyous festival of the church year. The climax of the church's teaching about the life of Jesus Christ comes naturally in this week. New members may be taken into the church according to the customs of the church either on Palm Sunday or on Easter. Many churches will choose to celebrate Holy Communion on the historic anniversary of the First Communion, Thursday evening. Others will desire to combine it with the joyous festival of Easter Day. But it should if possible be celebrated somewhere in every congregation on one of these two days, so that every village Christian may have an opportunity to take part in it.

Palm Sunday

The regular order of worship followed by the church may be used, with these special features:

1. The church and its compound may be decorated with palm branches if they are available; otherwise with other green leaves and branches.

2. Before the beginning of the service, let all the children take a procession through the village, singing and waving palm branches or other green boughs.

3. Special selections for the Order of service:

The Call to Worship: "And the multitudes that went before Him and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the Name of the Lord: Hosanna in the Highest!"

Matthew 21:9.

The Scripture Lessons: Old Testament: Psalms 5, 20, 69, 110. Zechariah 9.

New Testament: Luke 19:28-48.

The Benediction: "Now unto the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory forever and ever. Amen."

I Timothy 1:17.

Monday and Tuesday of Passion Week

On these days the usual program of daily prayers may be followed. The following Scripture Lessons are appropriate for these days:

Monday: Mark 11:12-19.

Tuesday: Mark 12 and 13, or selections from Matthew and Luke.

Wednesday

Wednesday of Passion Week in churches where communion is to be celebrated on Thursday evening will be used for the preparatory service. In other churches, a *Katha*, *Kirtan*, or *Kalakshepam* of the Life of Christ will be a most appropriate way to observe the day. The Scripture Lesson: Mark 14:1-12.

Thursday

Thursday may be the day for celebration of the Communion. Otherwise, if the Communion is to be on Easter Sunday, this is the appropriate time for the preparatory service, and for lyrical preaching of the story of Jesus' passion.

Good Friday

Good Friday should be a day of fasting and prayer, in memory of the death of Our Lord. All who can do so should gather at the place of worship for a service of devotion at noon. The following service has been used with good effect in some rural churches.

Call to Worship.—The leader will read Isaiah 53:1-6.

Silent Prayer, followed by the Lord's Prayer.

Hymn.

Then follows the reading of the account of Christ's passion, in seven parts, interspersed with hymns, brief meditation on each of the Seven Words from the Cross, and silent prayer.

Part I. Luke 23:26-34.

Meditation.—"Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."
Luke 23:34.

Hymn.—Beneath the Cross of Jesus.

Part II. Luke 23:34-43.

Meditation.—"To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

Luke 23:43.

Hymn.—In the Cross of Christ I Glory.

Part III. John 19:17-27.

Meditation.—"Behold thy son . . . Behold thy mother."

John 19:26-27.

Hymn.—When I Survey the Wondrous Cross.

Part IV. Matthew 27:39-47.

Meditation.—"My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?"

Matt. 27:46.

Hymn.—O Sacred Head Now Wounded.

Part V. Isaiah 53:7-10. John 19:28-29.

Meditation.—"I thirst."

John 19:28.

Hymn.—Hast Thou Seen the Christ, the Crucified?—Tilak.

Part VI. John 17:1-8; 19:30.

Meditation.—"It is finished!"

John 19:30.

Hymn.—"Tis Finished! So the Saviour Cried.—Stennett.

Part VII. Luke:44-49.

Meditation.—"Father, into Thy hands I commend my spirit."

Luke 23:46.

Hymn.—Must Jesus Bear the Cross Alone?

Benediction.—Grace to you and peace, from God the Father,
and our Lord Jesus Christ, who gave Himself for our sins,
that He might deliver us out of this present evil world,
according to the will of our God and Father: to whom
be the glory forever and ever. Amen. Gal. 1:3-5.

Note:—Most of the hymns here noted have been translated into the chief vernaculars. Some beautiful Indian hymns have also been written on themes appropriate to this occasion. Tilak's beautiful lyric is one of the best of these. This entire service can be conducted by a village leader even in the absence of a minister.

Saturday

On Saturday, the village Christians should gather at their burial place and thoroughly clean it, repair the graves, straighten markers, repair fence or hedge, and decorate the graves. It is appropriate that the Easter season should be a time when even the cemetery should witness to the triumphant faith in the resurrection.

The evening may be given over to a service of song and prayer.

Easter Sunday

In many Churches, the service will be held in the early dawn. Where this is done, all should come in procession to the Church carrying lights—torches, candles, or lanterns. If the service is later in the morning, a procession carrying flowers, branches, and singing hymns of joy and victory may parade through the village and to the Church.

Leader.—Christ is risen from the dead!

People.—He is risen indeed!

Leader.—Praise ye the Lord!

People.—The Lord's name be praised.

Leader.—Stand up and bless the Lord your God.

People.—Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!

Leader.—Let us pray.

Here follows a prayer of adoration and thanksgiving.

Hymn of Praise.

Responsive Reading.—Psalms 118.

Leader.—Glory be to the Father, and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

People.—As it was in the beginning, is now and ever shall be: world without end. Amen.

Adoration of the Risen Lord.—All will stand, and after each portion will say, Hallelujah.

Leader.—On the first day of the week, at early dawn, the women came unto the tomb, bringing the spices which they had prepared. And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. *Hallelujah.*

And the women departed quickly from the tomb with fear, and great joy. And behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. *Hallelujah.*

But Mary was standing at the tomb, weeping. And she said, They have taken away my Lord, and I know not where they have laid Him. And she beholdeth Jesus

standing, and knew not that it was Jesus, supposing Him to be the gardener. And Jesus saith unto her, Mary. She turneth and saith unto Him, Master. *Hallelujah.*

And behold, two of the disciples were going that very day to Emmaus. And as they communed and questioned together, Jesus Himself drew near, and went with them. *Hallelujah.*

And when the doors were shut where the disciples were, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. And when He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. *Hallelujah.*

Simon Peter saith unto the disciples, I go a fishing. They say unto him, We also go with thee. And that night they caught nothing. But when day was now breaking, Jesus stood upon the shore. And that disciple whom Jesus loved said unto Peter, It is the Lord. *Hallelujah.*

I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a great voice, and I turned to see the voice that spake with me. And having turned I saw one like unto the Son of Man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the breasts with a golden girdle. And His hair was as white as snow, and His eyes were as a flame of fire, and His feet like burnished brass, and His voice as the voice of many waters. And when I saw Him, I fell at His feet as one dead. And He laid His right hand upon me, saying, Fear not; for I am the First and the Last, and the Living One; and I was dead, and behold, I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of death and hell. *Hallelujah! Hallelujah! Hallelujah!*

Hymn, or Special Music.

New Testament Lesson.—I Cor. 15:1-28.

Prayer of Petition and Intercession.

Lord's Prayer.

Hymn.

Offering.—Special thanksgiving offerings may be made at this time.

Blessing on the Offering. Doxology.

Sermon.

Period of Silent Adoration and Prayer.

Hymn.

Benediction.—Now the God of peace, who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great shepherd of the sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ; to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

Heb. 13:20-21.

Pentecost—Whitsuntide

Pentecost or Whitsuntide is the birthday of the Church, and as such should be celebrated by all Churches. The service may have a double emphasis—the celebration of the gift of the Holy Spirit to the infant Church, and encouragement to modern Christians to witness to the saving power of Christ. In observing this festival in the village Churches, the usual order of service may be followed, with the following changes or special features:

The Call to Worship.—Because ye are sons, God sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father.
Gal. 4:6.

The hour cometh and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in Spirit and truth: for such doth the Father seek to be His worshippers.

People.—God is a Spirit: and they that worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.
John 4:23-24.

Scripture Lessons.—Selections may be made from the following:

Psalms 48, 104, 145.

Joel 2:28-32.

John 14:16-31; 16:1-14.

Acts 1:1-11; 2; 19:1-7.

A Special Hymn for this Occasion—Veni Creator Spiritus

(To be sung, if in the hymnal, or read responsively.)

Come, Holy Ghost, our souls inspire,

And lighten with celestial fire.

Thou the anointing Spirit art,

Who dost Thy sevenfold gifts impart.

Thy blessed unction from above.

Is comfort, life, and fire of love.

Enable with perpetual light,

The dullness of our blinded sight.

Anoint and cheer our soiled face
With the abundance of Thy grace.
Keep far our foes, give peace at home:
Where Thou art guide, no ill can come.

Teach us to know the Father, Son,
And Thee, of both, to be but One.
That through the ages all along,
This may be our endless song;
Praise to Thy eternal merit,
Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Benediction.—Now the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing that ye may abound in hope in the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Planting Festival

The planting festival should be observed the day the first good "planting rains" fall. It is a service which combines thanksgiving for rain with prayer for God's blessing on the fields, the seeds, the tools, the oxen, and on those who till the soil. It should be observed in every farming village. It is very widely observed in Africa, to some extent in China, and is becoming increasingly popular in many parts of India. The service outlined below is popular in several village churches in Western India where it has been observed for several years.

The Program

The first part of the service is held in the evening. The farmers all bring hoes, spades, and baskets of seed to the place of worship.

Leader.—Be glad then, ye children of Zion, and rejoice in the Lord your God; for He hath given you the former rain moderately and He causeth to come down for you the rain, the former rain, and the latter rain, in the first month. Joel 2:23.

Hymns of Thanksgiving, and Bhajans.

Scripture Lessons: Deut. 11:13-17; Psalms 65; 107:35-38. Matt. 6:26-34.

Prayer of Thanksgiving for Rain.

Message.—Suggested Texts: II Cor. 9:10. Psalms 65:9-11.

Service of Blessing:

All bring forward the baskets of seed and place them before the altar, saying, "Seeds we bring, O Lord, to Thee."

Minister.—May the Lord who sendeth seedtime and harvest bless this seed to His glory.

Then all bring their tools and lay them before the altar, saying: "Our tools we lay, O Lord, at Thy feet."

Minister.—May God strengthen you to use these tools for His Glory.

Prayer of Dedication, and asking the blessing of God on seeds and tools.

Lord's Prayer, in unison.

Benediction.

Note:—The tools and baskets of seed are left in the worship place all night.

At dawn the next morning, all gather again at the place of worship, bringing their oxen and ploughs also.

Call to Worship.—Let everything that hath breath praise the Lord; Praise ye the Lord. Psalm 150:6.

Hymn of Praise.

Scripture Lesson.—Deut. 28:1-6; Mark 4:1-9.

Prayer of dedication and blessing.

Benediction: The Lord bless thee and keep thee:

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give thee peace. Amen.

After the benediction, if it can be arranged, the congregation may partake of a light morning meal, or tea together. Then all take their tools, oxen, ploughs, and baskets of seed, and go to their fields singing special *bhajans* prepared for this occasion.

Festival of the First Fruits

This festival has its counterpart among many of the primitive tribes of Indian farmer folk, who always offer some of the first fruits of field or garden to their deities. The Hebrews made it one of their most joyous feasts. As a means of helping to make all the daily life of our farmer Christians religious and God-centered, it is a useful service.

It should be observed at the beginning of harvest. On the appointed day all should gather in the place of worship, each bringing something of the first fruits of field or garden—baskets of grain, sheaves, or fruit.

Leader.—Bless the Lord, O my soul;

And all that is within me, bless His holy name.

People.—Bless the Lord, O my soul, And forget not all His benefits:

Leader.—The eyes of all wait upon Thee;

And Thou givest them their meat in due season.

People.—Thou openest Thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.

Leader.—The Lord is righteous in all His ways;

People.—And holy in all His works. Psalms 103:1-2; 145:15-17.

Leader.—Let us give thanks to God (Prayer of thanksgiving)

Responsive Reading.—Psalm 67.

Hymn.—We Plough the Fields and Scatter.

Bible Reading.—Leviticus 23:9-14. Matthew 13:3-9; 18-23.

Short Message.—Talk by the leader, on the dedication of first fruits to God.

Offering of first Fruits to God.—Read Prov. 3:9-10.

While a hymn of consecration is being sung, each person will bring forward his first-fruits offering and lay it on the altar or table.

Then the leader will read Malachi 3:7-12.

Doxology.—All, standing, will join in singing.

Dedicatory Prayer.

Benediction.—The Lord bless thee and keep thee:

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be
gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee, and give
the peace. Amen.

Harvest Thanksgiving Service

The harvest festival should be observed soon after the main season's crops have been harvested. In some sections of India this may be at Divali or Dasserah time, in others as late as January or February. It may be a movable festival, to be observed according to the needs and appropriate time for each village church. It is a time for recognizing our stewardship of God's good gifts given us through the soil and the trees, a time for the dedication of our year's toil and its fruits to God.

The program given below was given at Pendra Road, C. P., in 1936, and is a beautiful and appropriate service which can be followed in any village church. The place of worship was decorated beautifully with flowers and leaves, fruits and sheaves of grain. Over the entrance was a banner inscribed with the words, "Enter into His gates with Thanksgiving." Long before the hour appointed for the service, the people began to come from every side, carrying their gifts of baskets and bags of grain, some bringing it in carts. Children came carrying eggs, fruits, vegetables, and baskets of rice. Many brought gifts of cash which they had earned. The cash offering amounted to about Rs. 225, and 108 bushels of grain were given, besides fruits and many other products.

The Order of Service

Call to Worship.—O Give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good;

For His Mercy endureth forever, Psalms 136:1.

Prayer of Invocation.

Hymn of Thanksgiving.—Psalm 136 set to music.

Responsive Reading of Thanksgiving Scriptures.—Read by students.

(The following are appropriate Scriptures which may be read: Deut. 8; Psalms 8, 23, 63, 65, 67, 103, 104, 107, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 150; Ezekiel 34:25-31; Luke 12:13-21.—Editor.)

Special Thanksgiving Hymn.—Sung by Girls' Choir.

Thanksgiving Prayer.

Hymn.—We Plough the Fields and Scatter.

Responsive Reading on Stewardship.—Read by the congregation.

(The following or other appropriate Scriptures may be read: Psalms 24, 72. Malachi 3:7-12. Matthew 6:19-34. II Cor. 8:1-9; 9:6-15.—Editor.)

Thanksgiving Hymn.—Composed by a village man, and sung by a group of village people, accompanied by drum and cymbals.

The Thanksgiving Message.—Text—Psalm 116:12-13.

Prayer.

The Thanksgiving Offering.—At this time the hymn, O Lord of Heaven, Earth, and Sea was sung. During the singing, every worshipper came forward in an orderly manner and laid his gift in the place provided for the gifts. Cash and small articles were laid upon a table.

Prayer of Dedication.

Doxology.—Sung by entire congregation, standing.

Benediction.

A Christian Observance of Divali

Divali—Dipavali is a festival observed in nearly every part of India at the beginning of the New Year. While it is surrounded by various legends, and in backward areas still has old idolatrous connections, it is generally looked upon by Hindus as a festival celebrating the triumph of the light of truth over the darkness of ignorance. It includes in the five days of festivities the closing of the old year, the beginning of the new year, illuminations, feasting, fireworks, special bathing, cleaning and special decoration of dwellings, wearing new garments, and the exchange of amenities between brothers and sisters.

Since it has relatively little objectionable association with idolatrous practises, and is a general festival of rejoicing among the people of town and country, it might well be celebrated by the village Christians. Not with the old connotations, of course, but by putting new meaning into the various days of observance, a really Christian observance of *Divali* may be planned.

The following program has been used in part in some villages, and is planned for an area where the Harvest Thanksgiving service can be observed at the same time. It is planned for the five days usually celebrated by villagers, and each day's observance has some connection with the old festival which they knew, but transformed into festal celebration of great Christian truths or aspects of Christian living.

First Day—Dhana Teras (Wealth Thirteenth)

This is the day formerly observed by the worship of wealth. It may be observed in village churches by giving special teaching on Christian stewardship. The church officials may visit all members on this day to give special teaching and encouragement in Christian stewardship in preparation for the special thanksgiving offering, and may take pledges. The designs made of white and colored powder or flour on the ground

in front of the doorstep are beautiful, and may be made by the Christians, too. Illuminations, in which tiny clay saucer lamps are used, may begin on this night. The evening prayer service should center around the stewardship theme, and may be followed by singing *bhajans*.

Second Day—Kali Chaudasa

The service of prayer on this day may center around the theme of Christ's victory over fear of every kind, and our triumph through Him over all the forces of evil in our village life, evil spirits, the forces of nature, temptation. It will be a service of thanksgiving to God as our Refuge and Protector.

The evening will be given over to singing and illuminations.

Third Day—Last Day of the Year

This is the day for the Harvest Thanksgiving Festival. The program for such a festival is found on page 107. The evening, if the thanksgiving service is in the daytime, may be given over to a community dinner of the village Christian community, followed by singing of *Bhajans*, *Kirtans*, and *Kathas*. Then may come a special period of prayer to celebrate the closing moments of the old year.

Fourth Day—Divali—New Year's Day

On the morning of New Year's Day there may be a procession to the place of worship. The service will center around the theme of Christ the Light of the World. The church and the homes of the Christians will be decorated both for this and the previous day's services. The service may follow this order:

Service for Divali—New Year

Leader.—Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee. For behold, darkness shall cover the earth, and gross darkness the peoples; but the Lord shall arise upon thee, and his glory shall be seen upon thee. And Gentiles shall come to thy light, and kings to the brightness of thy rising. (Isaiah 60:1-3.) Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost:

People.—As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be;
world without end. Amen.

Leader.—Praise ye the Lord.

People.—The Lord's name be praised.

Leader.—Let us pray. (Here follows a prayer of confession and invocation.)

Hymn of Praise.

Responsive Reading.—Isaiah 60:1-5; 18-22.

Hymn of Prayer.

New Testament Lesson.—To be read by leader or other educated person.

Matthew 5:13-16. John 1:1-14; 8:12, 31-32. I John 1:5-7.

Bidding Prayer of Intercession and Petition.

The Creed.

Hymn or Bhajan.

Message, on Christ the Light of the World, or related theme.

Service of Dedication.—In this service, all will be asked to renew their pledges of faithfulness to Christ, and to dedicate their lives anew to Christ, to live exemplary lives and to serve each other, and witness, during the new year which begins to-day.

Benediction.—The Lord make you to increase and abound in love one toward all another and toward men; to the end He may establish your hearts unblameable in holiness before our God and Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all His saints. Amen. I Thess. 3:12-13.

Fifth Day—Bhai Bija

This day is particularly appropriate for stressing Christian family relationships. The ancient custom of brothers and sisters exchanging visits and having family dinners may well be encouraged. The services of worship may center around the theme of the Christian Family. Another custom that may be established, is to use this day as a special day for winning one's near relatives who have not yet become Christian, to Christ.

A Memorial Service

This service is based upon the custom of primitive tribes of celebrating a day in memory of their relatives who have died during the year, and the ancient Christian "All Saints Day." It may be observed in a regular Sunday service of worship. It will often happen that a minister cannot be present at a burial service, and this service is a memorial to all who have died during the year. It is at the same time a celebration of our relation with the Church Triumphant, the whole body of those whose heirs we are in the life of faith.

Call to Worship.—Lord, Thou has been our dwelling place in all generations. Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever Thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from everlasting to everlasting, Thou art God.

Psalm 90:1, 2.

Prayer.

Hymn.—For All the Saints Who From Their Labours Rest.
(If this hymn is not in the vernacular, it should be translated).

Canticle of the Departed.—To be read responsively:

The souls of the righteous are in the hand of God; and no torment shall touch them.

In the eyes of the foolish they seemed to die: and their departure was accounted for their hurt.

And their going from us was taken to be their ruin: but they are in peace.

For though in the sight of men they be punished: yet is their hope full of immortality.

And having borne a little chastening, they shall receive great good: because God made trial of them, and found them worthy for Himself.

As gold in the furnace He proved them: And as a whole burnt-offering He accepted them.

They that trust in Him shall understand truth: and the faithful shall abide with Him in love.

Because grace and mercy are to His chosen: and He will graciously visit His holy ones.

For in the Lord is their reward: and the care of them is with the most High.

Therefore shall they receive a glorious kingdom: and a crown of beauty from the Lord's own hand.

—Wisdom III.

Hymn.

Scripture Lesson.—Psalm 90.

Selections from Hebrews 11. I Thess. 4:13-8.

Recognition Service.—The names of all in the village church who have died during the past year will be read, then silent prayer.

Prayer of Thanksgiving.—The minister will offer a prayer of thanksgiving for those who have gone before, and the influence of them upon us.

Sermon.

Hymn.

Benediction.—Now the God of peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.

A Candle-Lighting Service for New Christians

This service was used with great effectiveness in the rural Church at Ahwa, Dangs Forest, Bombay Presidency. It was prepared by Rev. and Mrs. A. F. Bollinger. It might be used also in the "Christian Divali" program.

A Hymn of Praise.

Prayer.

Explanation of the Service.—The leader explains the meaning of the service, using such Scriptures as Gen. 1:1-3, and John 1:1-5 as the basis of the service. As God gave us natural light, in the sun, moon, and stars to light the day and night, so spiritual gleams showing the nature of God began to shine and illuminate the darkness and evil of men's hearts. Through the prophets and leaders of old came these beams of light helping men understand and distinguish good from evil.

(At this point, the lights in the building are carried out or extinguished, the room left in darkness).

Beams of Light.—Represented by tiny candles and readings from the prophets. The reader stands behind a curtain and reads the references impressively, while at each reading a little boy carrying a candle comes from a side door and stands at the center of the Church. He gives his candle to the Leader, who places the lighted candles in a row on the altar or table. Then the boy goes out.
The Beams of Light from the Prophets.

1st Candle-bearer—Amos 5:14, 15, 24.

2nd Candle-bearer—Deut. 6:5.

3rd Candle-bearer—Micah 6:8.

4th Candle-bearer—Isaiah 49:6.

5th Candle-bearer—Habakkuk 2:20.

6th Candle-bearer—John 1:6-7.

(The room is now lighted by these tiny candles)

God the Light.—The leader now speaks of God through His Son giving the True Light to the World. I John 1:5; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:14. (At this point a large candle representing Jesus Christ, God's perfect Fulfilment is brought to the Leader, and he places it in a higher place, where its light outshines the smaller candles.)

Hymn.—Raja Esu Ayah. (Christ Jesus has come).

Leader.—Jesus said, I am the Light of the World. By His life and His wonderful works, He lived out the meaning of the names prophesied for Him: Wonderful, Counsellor, Almighty God, Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace. And He said unto us all, Ye are the Light of the World.

Hymn of Dedication and Praise.—(The group of newly baptized Christians, who have been sitting on either side of the Church at the front, now rise and sing this hymn)—
Oh, Happy Day that Fixed My Choice.

Leader.—Our Holy Scripture gives us light and guidance for following in the steps of our Lord and Master Jesus Christ. (Reads):

Psalms 27:1; 119:105. Prov. 4:18. Rom. 13:12.

Candle Lighting.—The newly baptized group, who have remained standing during the reading of foregoing passages now step forward one after another and receive from the leader a small unlighted candle which they light at the large candle representing Christ. They take their former places until all have lit their candles.

Dedicatory Prayer.—By the leader.

Hymn.—We Walk in the Light. The group with candles sings this hymn, and the rest of the congregation join the refrain. While singing the last stanzas, the group with candles walks out, holding the lighted candles high, and the congregation follow them, all singing as they go to their homes.

Dedication of a Threshing Floor

Among the primitive tribes and farming castes in many sections of India a religious service is performed at the time when the threshing-floor is made ready. Many Christian farmers are asking for a service to correspond with it. The following is suggested. It may be performed by the minister, or in his absence by the farmer himself in the presence of his family. It would be well if some vernacular Christian poet would produce a special hymn for this service.

Hymn.

Scripture Reading.—Numbers 15:20. Psalm 65:9-12. II Cor. 9-10.

Prayer of Dedication, and for Protection and Blessing.

O God, who sendest the rains and fruitful seasons, who visitest the earth and waterest it, we Thy servants give Thee humble and grateful thanks for this new harvest season. For bountiful crops and a fruitful season we give Thee our offering of praise. Thou hast crowned this year with Thy goodness. We dedicate now this threshing-floor to Thee for the glory. May all the grain threshed here be used for Thy glory alone. May Thine angels guard this place, and these Thy servants who shall here thresh the grain Thou gavest. Grant that of this precious grain, none may be lost, but that it shall all be used to feed Thy hungry children. May all who eat of it know that of Thy grace and love Thou givest them bread in due season. May even the little birds who shall glean their food here be conscious of the Heavenly Father's care. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who is the true Bread of Life come down from heaven. Amen.

Threshing the First Sheaf.—The grain from this first sheaf, or as many as the farmer shall decide, is to be kept separate for the First-Fruits Day offering, as sacred to the Lord of the Harvest.

Benediction.—The Lord bless thee and keep thee:

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee. The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. Amen.

Form of Service for Blessing Well

Hymn.

Minister.—In the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost.

People.—Amen.

Minister.—Let all the people be gathered together.

Psalm

O give thanks unto the Lord; for He is good:
For His mercy endureth forever.

He turneth the wilderness into a pool of water.

And a dry land into watersprings.

And there He maketh the hungry to dwell,

That they may prepare a city of habitation,

And sow fields and plant vineyards,

And get them fruits of increase.

He blesseth them also, so that they are multiplied greatly;

And He suffereth not their cattle to decrease.

Again, they are diminished and bowed down,

Through oppression, trouble, and sorrow.

He poureth contempt upon princes,

And causeth them to wander in the waste where there is no way.

Yet setteth He the needy on high from affliction,

And maketh him families like a flock.

The upright shall see it and be glad;

And all iniquity shall stop her mouth.

Who is wise will give heed to these things;

And they will consider the loving kindnesses of the Lord.

Psalm 107:1, 35-43.

Bible Reading.—John 4:4-15.

Minister.—Let us pray: O Lord, have mercy upon us.
O Christ, have mercy upon us.
O Lord, have mercy upon us.

The Lord's Prayer.

Minister.—He sendeth forth springs into the valleys.

People.—They run among the mountains.

Minister.—He watereth the mountains from His chambers.

People.—The earth is satisfied with the fruits of the works.

Minister.—He causeth the grass to grow for the cattle and herbs for the service of man.

People.—That he may bring forth good out of the earth.

Minister.—Therefore shall ye draw water out of the wells of salvation with joy.

People.—And in that day shall ye say 'Give thanks unto the Lord.'

Minister.—For with Thee is the fountain of life.

People.—In Thy light shall we see light.

Minister.—Let us pray:

O Almighty God our Father, Thou art the giver of all good gifts. We praise Thee for inspiring Thy servants to help us in getting this well. May they enjoy the fruits of Thy grace. We thank Thee for removing all our difficulties, and we beseech Thee to accept all our thanksgivings through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Merciful and Almighty God, Who didst prepare the garden of Eden for our first parents Adam and Eve, and because of their fall didst compel them to till the soil: Have mercy on us all, meek and lowly, who depend upon Thy grace. Grant that we may have an abundance of water from this well. As thou art willing to give us the water of this well to quench our bodily thirst, give us also the water of life to satisfy our souls. Through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O God, who didst change bitter water into sweet by means of Thy Word, we humbly beseech Thee that the water of this well may be a real blessing to us all. By drinking of it, may all bitterness be removed from our hearts through the sweetness of the Cross, so that we all may live in unity and love. We praise Thee and thank Thee, O God, for all Thy mercies. Thou art the only living God, Father, Son and Holy Ghost forever and ever. Amen.

Benediction:

—From the Bishop of Nasik.

Service for Beginning a Village House

Among nearly all classes of people there is some kind of religious ceremony when the first foundations are dug, or the first post planted, of a village house. Christian farmers in many Churches are now calling in their neighbours at such a time, having brief religious service, and then serving tea. The following is a brief program for such an occasion.

Hymn.

Prayer of Thanksgiving.

Psalm 127.—To be sung, or read by the minister.

Scripture Lesson.—Matthew 7:24-27.

Brief talk by the Minister.

Digging Ceremony.—The minister, and all others present will then plant the first post, or whatever the first work of building may be.

Thank-Offering.

Benediction.—Now the Lord of peace Himself give you peace at all times, in all ways. The Lord be with all who dwell in this house. Amen.

Social Hour and tea.

A Service for the Dedication of a Village Home

Note.—When the house is completed, the family should set a day for its dedication, call in their village brethren and friends and the pastor. Let the house be decorated with flowers if available, and with garlands of green leaves. In a prominent place in the house there should be a picture of Christ hung, and beside it on a shelf or other permanent place, a Bible or New Testament should be placed. This should be the center of family worship in the new home. At the appointed hour, the people will gather in front of the door, which is to be locked until the appropriate time. After the service, tea or other refreshments may be served.

Leader.—Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it:

Except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh but in vain.
Ps. 127:1.

Family.—Come Lord Jesus, be Thou our guest;
Let this our house be Thy dwelling place.

A Prayer of Invocation.

Leader.—(Unlocking the door) Enter into His gates with thanksgiving;
And into His courts with praise.

Hymn of Dedication.—All enter singing, the minister and the family take their places near the picture, and the minister opens the Bible.

Scripture Lesson.—May be selected from among these lessons:
Deut. 6:1-13. Deut. 11:18-21. Ruth 1. Proverbs 1:8-9,
31:10-31. Matthew 18:1-5. Luke 10:38-42. John 2. Ephesians 6:1-2.

Short talk by the Minister.

Act of Dedication. Leader.—To whom do you dedicate this house?

People.—We dedicate this house unto the Lord.

Leader.—Will you in this home trust Him and live in the light of His presence?

Family.—We will trust Him and follow Him.

Leader.—Do you give Christ and the Word of God first place in this home?

Family.—We do.

Leader.—Let us dedicate this home to God in prayer.

Prayer of Dedication.

The Lord's Prayer.

Benediction.—The Lord bless thee and keep thee:

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee and be gracious unto thee:

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. Amen.

Service for the Dedication of Small Children

This service is planned for use in churches which do not practice infant baptism. In churches where it has been in use for some years, it is greatly appreciated by parents, and provides an unique opportunity to tie up little children with the church. It may be incorporated in a regular service of worship, or used on special occasions such as Christmas and on Children's Day.

Hymn.—(During the singing of the hymn, parents will bring their children forward to be dedicated. A large candle should be kept in readiness, also one small candle for each child. At the close of the hymn, the large candle, representing Christ, is lighted. In some churches, instead of the candle-lighting feature, a large picture of Christ blessing the Children is exhibited).

Scripture Lesson.—I Samuel 1:24-28. Mark 10:13-16.

Brief Talk.—The minister may speak on our duty as parents, or the friendship of Christ for little children.

Pledges.—The minister will ask these questions of the parents:

Q. God our Heavenly Father has entrusted this little child into your care. He is like soft clay in your hands, which you may mould into beauty or hopelessly mar. Do you solemnly promise before God to rear him as a child of God, to teach him to serve and love God and his fellow men all his days, and so far as you can to protect him from all evil?

A. With God's help we will so do.

Q. Will you maintain in your home an atmosphere of purity and devotion and love for the sake of this little child?

A. It is our purpose so to do.

Q. Do you now solemnly dedicate this child to God, that He may ever guide him, keep him, protect him, and use him to His glory?

A. We do dedicate him now to God.

Minister.—God has heard your promises. May He give you grace to keep them, to rear this child to be His child, to lead his footsteps in the path of righteousness.

Naming.—If the child has not been named, at this point the minister will give the child the name chosen by the parents.

Candle-Lighting.—A small candle is now lighted for each child by the father or mother, at the large candle, and is placed on the altar.

Thank-Offering.

Prayer.—Our Heavenly Father, whose face the angels of little children do always behold, we give Thee thanks for the precious life of this little child entrusted to our care. In Thy love and mercy accept him into Thy gracious keeping. Protect him from evil, and from all temptation too strong for him to bear. Guide his little feet in the paths of truth. Make him a blessing to his parents and his church. Give to his father and mother grace and wisdom to guide him aright. Help them to surround him with an atmosphere of love and tender care. Help them to be perfect examples of Christian living before this child. Make him Thy true servant, and bring him into Thy eternal Kingdom. Hear our prayer for him, in the name of Jesus Christ, who Himself was once a little child in Bethlehem, and who is the friend of all little ones. Amen.

Benediction.—The Lord bless thee and keep thee:

The Lord make His face to shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon thee and give thee peace. Amen.

Service for Burial of the Dead

Note.—If there is no minister present, this service may be read by the leading Christian of the village, or by any person able to read. Let the body be decently clothed and prepared for burial or cremation, as the custom of the Church may be, and when all is ready, the service may be read as follows:

At the Home

Reader.—I am the resurrection, and the life: saith the Lord: he that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live: and whosoever liveth and believeth in me, shall never die.

John 11:25-26.

We brought nothing into the world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.

I Tim. 6:7; Job 1:21.

Let not your heart be troubled: believe in God, believe also in me.

John 14:1.

Prayer.—O God, the Lord of Life, the Conqueror over death, our Help in every time of trouble, who dost not willingly grieve or afflict the children of men; comfort us who mourn and give us grace in the presence of death to worship Thee the Ever-living; that while we entrust the soul of the departed to Thee with faith, we may have sure hope of eternal life, and be enabled to put our whole trust in Thy wonderful goodness and mercy; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

The Lord's Prayer.

A Hymn of Comfort or hope in Eternal Life.

Reader.—Let us hear the comforting word of God:

Scripture Lessons:

For an adult

Psalms 90

Isaiah 40:6-8

I Cor. 15:20-22; 35-44
51-58.

John 14:1-3.

For a child

Psalms 23.

Isaiah 40:11.

Mark 10:13-26; 18; 10.

Prayer.—This prayer should be a special prayer that those bereaved may find full comfort and perfect peace in God.

Benediction.—The Lord bless you and keep you:

The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious unto you;

The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace, both now and evermore. Amen.

At the Grave or Burning Place

At the grave, when the body has been put into its place, the reader shall read:

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. We believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so we believe that them which sleep in Jesus will God bring with Him.

Committal Service.—While someone tosses flowers or earth upon the body, these words will be read: Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God in His wise providence to take out of this world the soul of our deceased brother (sister) we therefore commit his (her) body to the ground: earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust; in the hope of the resurrection unto life eternal; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Prayer.—O God, whose mercies cannot be numbered; accept our prayers on behalf of the soul of Thy servant departed, and grant him (her) an entrance into the land of light

and joy, in the fellowship of Thy saints, where there is no more pain, nor death, nor trouble nor tears. May he hear Thy voice saying to him, Come, ye blessed of my Father, receive the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. Grant this, we beseech Thee, O most merciful Father, through Jesus Christ our Lord and Redeemer. Amen.

For a child the following Prayer may be used instead:

Heavenly Father, whose face the angels of little children do always behold, and who by Thy Son Jesus Christ has taught us that of such is the Kingdom of Heaven; we commend unto Thy faithful keeping the soul of this little child, whom Thou hast gathered with the lambs in Thy bosom; beseeching Thee that Thou wilt accept the innocence of this Thy little one, cleansing him from all stain of earthly life; that he; may dwell forever in Thy presence, and find a home in the heavenly Jerusalem, that city which is full of boys and girls playing in the streets thereof; and this we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Benediction.—Now the God of Peace, that brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the Sheep, through the blood of the everlasting covenant, make you perfect in every good work to do His will, working in you that which is well pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ: to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen.

Offertory Sentences

All things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.

Ascribe unto the Lord the glory due unto His name;
Bring an offering, and come before Him;
Worship the Lord in holy array.

I. Chronicles 16:29.

The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof; the world and they that dwell therein.

Psalms 24:1.

The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit;
A broken and a contrite heart, O God, Thou wilt not despise.

Psalms 51:17.

What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?

I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord.

Psalms 116:12.

Honor the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of all thy increase:

So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy vats shall overflow with new wine.

Proverbs 3:9-10.

Wherewith shall I come before Jehovah, and bow myself before the high God? shall I come before Him with burnt-offerings, with calves a year old? Will Jehovah be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth Jehovah require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Micah 6:6-8.

Bring ye the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house, and prove Me now herewith, saith the Lord of hosts, if I will not open you the windows of heaven, and pour you out a blessing, that there shall not be room enough to receive it.

Malachi 3:10.

Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon the earth, where moth and rust consume, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth consume, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: for where thy treasure is, there will thy heart be also.

Matthew 6:19-21.

But seek ye first His Kingdom, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Matthew 6:33.

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, that He Himself said, It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Acts 20:35.

I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service.

Romans 12:1.

Upon the first day of the week let each one of you lay by him in store, as he may prosper, that no collections be made when I come.

I Cor. 16:2.

For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might become rich.

II Cor. 8:9.

Let each man do according as he hath purposed in his heart:
not grudgingly, nor of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful
giver.

II Cor. 9:7.

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom can be no variation, neither shadow that is cast by turning.

James 1:17.

A Table of the Movable Festivals for 1939-1960

Year	Easter	First day of Lent	Ascension Day	Pentecost
1939	April 9....	Feb. 22.....	May 18.....	May 28
1940	March 24....	" 6.....	" 2.....	" 12
1941	April 13....	" 26.....	" 22....	June 1
1942	" 5.....	" 18....	" 14....	May 24
1943	" 25.....	March 10.....	June 3..	June 13
1944	" 9.....	Feb. 22.....	May 18.....	May 28
1945	" 1.....	" 14.....	" 10..	" 20
1946	" 21....	March 6.....	" 30....	June 9
1947	" 6....	Feb. 19....	" 15.....	May 25
1948	March 28....	" 10.....	" 6.....	" 16
1949	April 17.....	March 2....	" 26....	June 5
1950	" 9.....	Feb. 22.....	" 18.....	May 28
1951	March 25....	" 7.....	" 3.....	" 13
1952	April 13.....	" 26.....	" 22.....	June 1
1953	" 5.....	" 18.....	" 14.....	May 24
1954	" 18.....	March 3....	" 27.....	June 6
1955	" 10.....	Feb. 23....	" 19....	May 29
1956	" 1.....	" 14.....	" 10....	" 20
1957	" 21.....	March 6.....	" 30.....	June 9
1958	" 6.....	Feb. 19.....	" 15....	May 25
1959	March 29.....	" 11.....	" 7.....	" 17
1960	April 17.....	March 2....	" 26.....	June 5

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